Church of Christ, Newington, Conn.

Celebration of the

One Hundredth Anniversary

Of the Church Building, and the

175th of the Organization of the Church,

On October 2 and 3, 1897.

PRESS OF WM. J. HOLDEN, SOUTHINGTON, CONN.

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The Newington Congregational Church and Additions, 1897

SRLF
YALE

Order of Services for October 2nd, 1897.

Morning at 10:30.

Voluntary.
Invocation, Rev. J. W. Cooper.
Hymn 929, Music, Duke Street, By the Congregation.
Greeting, By Pastor, Rev. Herbert Macy.

Fraternal Salutations.

From Hartford Theological Seminary, Pres. C. D. Hartranft.
Sister Churches { Wethersfield, Rev. W. M. Baker.
Farmington, Rev. Geo. L. Clark.
Hartford, First Church, Rev. C. M. Lamson.
Anthem. By Choir.

Papers Relating to the Early Church.

The Two Meeting Houses, Roger Welles.
Alterations of present Meeting House, Dea. Levi S. Deming.
Music of the Church in early days, John G. Stoddard.
Collation and Social Hour from 12:30 to 2:30.

Afternoon Meeting—A Memorial Service.

Anthem, By Choir.
Prayer, Rev. J. O. Barrows.

Addresses.

The First Pastor, Rev. Elisha Williams, 1720-1726.
Rev. C. H. Williams.
The Second Pastor, Rev. Simon Backus, 1726-1746,
Oswald P. Backus.
The Third Pastor, Rev. Joshua Belden, 1747-1803,
Joshua Belden.
Hymn 1162, By the Congregation.
The Fourth Pastor, Rev. Joab Brace, 1805-1855,
Reminiscences by several members of the Congregation.
Anthem, By Choir.
The Fifth Pastor, Rev. W. P. Aikin, 1857-1867,
E. Stanley Welles.
The Seventh Pastor, Rev. W. J. Thomson, 1875-1879,
John S. Kirkham.
Rev. John E. Elliott, 1879-1884, Miss Agnes W. Belden.

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Sunday, October 3rd, 1897.

Morning Service at 10:30 O'clock.

Voluntary.	
Invocation,	Rev. J. O. Barrows.
The Ancient Covenant.	
Anthem,	By Choir.
Scripture Lesson.	
Prayer,	Rev. Sanford S. Martyn.
Offertory.	
Hymn,	By the Congregation.
Historical Sermon,	Rev. Herbert Macy.
Hymn,	By the Congregation.
Benediction.	

Short Session of the Sunday School immediately after morning service, with paper on the Sunday School by

Deacon C. K. Atwood.

Evening Service at 7 O'clock.

The Eunœan Society, Mrs. F. C. Latimer.

Addresses by

The Sixth Pastor, Rev. Sanford S. Martyn, 1868-1870.

—AND—

The Eighth Pastor, Rev. J. O. Barrows, 1885-1891.

Newington's Celebration.

1722 Church Organized. 1797 Church Built.

[FROM THE RELIGIOUS HERALD.]

Beautiful for situation, neat, cosy and furnished with pipe organ, a light and bright chapel with upright piano, infant class room with cabinet organ, parlor, kitchen, and dining room, the Newington church presented an inviting appearance, for under the tasteful fingers of Mrs. Joshua Belden and her helpers the woods and gardens lent their beauty and fragrance to the scene,—clematis, golden rod, and ferns, marigolds, chrysanthemums, yellow roses, and potted palms. A beautiful white silk banner with gold fringe and heavy gold tassels stood at one side of the desk, inscribed in jeweled letters, "The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers," and on the other side a motto, "1722-1797-1897."

The exercises lasted two days, and were of deep and uniform interest, even to a stranger. The pastor, Rev. Herbert Macy, who, as one of his parishioners said, "has never preached a dull sermon," presided, gave greeting, and preached the historical sermon. The music, planned by the organist, Mrs. Ellen S. Deming, Mrs. Macy and Mrs. Arthur Merrill, embraced some grand old anthems and hymns. The Newington people, who are wonderfully polite and well bred, outdid themselves in hospitality and courtesy to their guests.

President C. D. Hartranft of the Hartford seminary, where Mr. Macy graduated, congratulated the church on its maintenance of the holy faith, and the small number of its pastors—nine settled pastors in 175 years.

Rev. Wm. M. Baker, as pastor of the mother church at Wethersfield, gave greeting. Rev. George L. Clark, of Farmington, in a witty and charming speech, referred to Isaac Watts as the patron saint of Newington and quoted, "Let dogs delight to bark and bite," and other of his poems.

Dr. Lamson, as pastor of the oldest church in

Connecticut, gave Mr. Macy the right hand of fellowship. Dr. Lamson said his father received 200 cents from an aunt for committing 200 of Isaac Watt's hymns, and afterward some one of the family killed a dog and borrowed the $2 to pay a lawyer to shield him from the consequence of his crime, and never returned it. Dr. Lamson suggested the idea of a society of the colonial church. The secret of Dr. Lamson's popularity lies deeper than his rare ability, even his kindliness of heart, which never varies.

The rendering of the grand old anthem, "Before Jehovah's awful throne," by the choir was fine. Roger Welles had prepared two valuable papers on the two meeting houses, both of which we publish, but, owing to lack of time, he deemed it advisable to read only the second. The dissensions of the fathers concerning the site of the present structure caused much amusement. The aged Dea. Levi S. Deming, a former resident, but now of Middletown, was wisely chosen to rehearse the various changes of the edifice, from its cold and bare but reverently loved room, to its present modern and comfortable auditorium.

Two hours were now delightfully spent in greetings and feasting, after which came the "Music of the Church in early days," by John G. Stoddard. Words would fail to picture the indescribable charm of this paper.

Rev. C. H. Williams gave a somewhat lengthy, extemporaneous address on the first pastor, Rev. Elisha Williams, which was listened to with unflagging attention and interest.

Oswald P. Backus of Rome, N. Y., a man of finished and scholarly appearance, gave an interesting paper on his ancestor, Rev. Simon Backus, the second pastor, who served Newington for 20 years.

Joshua Belden, the fourth, of Newington, great-grandson of Rev. Joshua Belden, the third pastor, who served in this field from his 23rd year until he was 79, and then as pastor emeritus for ten years more, gave a brief and excellent paper.

The interest of the day centered about the reminiscences of the fourth pastor, Rev. Dr. Joab Brace, by Dea. Levi S. Deming. It was a sight long to be remembered, the aged man standing with the glorious light of the autumnal day about him and the large audience, every face showing strong feeling as the speaker depicted the wonderful life of the man whom he had loved with a reverent affection. Although not as historically valuable, it was the gem of the day.

J. S. Kirkham followed with a brief address showing Dr. Brace's influence in the schools, in which Mr. Kirkham was a former teacher; also speaking of Dr. Brace's eccentric abruptness.

Father Kemp's "Jerusalem, my happy home" was well sung by the choir.

E. Stanley Welles' paper on the fifth pastor, Rev. W. P. Aikin, was choice, and we take pleasure in giving it to you that it may speak for itself; as also the paper on the seventh pastor by John S. Kirkham.

Miss Agnes W. Belden's paper on Rev. John E. Elliott had not a superfluous word. It was now past five, and thus closed an eventful day in the church's history. Letters of regret were read from Rev. Dr. Cooper of New Britain, Rev. Cyrus W. Francis of Brookfield Center and ex-President Grover Cleveland, whose ancestor once preached at Newington, and others.

Sunday bright and beautiful drew together a large audience to listen to Rev. Mr. Macy's historical address. All were satisfied, as our readers will understand when they read The Religious Herald. Mr. Macy has an interesting family of bright little ones and Mrs. Macy is a true helpmeet in every good work.

Newington Sunday school is large and prosperous, Joshua Belden, superintendent. We regret that lack of space which compels us to omit the paper on the Sunday school, by Dea. C. K. Atwood, former superintendent.

Revs. S. S. Martyn of Derby and J. O. Barrows of the Road church, Stonington, former pastors, occupied positions of prominence and made addresses. Sunday evening Mrs. F. C. Latimer described the Eunœan benevolent society named by Mary Brace.

The representative of The Religious Herald voices the general sentiment of gratitude at the friendly hospitality and genuine courtesy shown by the Newington people to their guests.

COMMITTEES.

Executive Committee—Rev. Herbert Macy, Roger Welles, J. S. Kirkham.

Invitation Committee.—E. Stanley Welles, Miss Agnes W. Belden, Alfred B. Fish.

Floral Committee—Mrs. Joshua Belden, Mrs. A. P. Francis, Mrs. A. H. Merrill, Mrs. Ellen Deming.

Entertainment Committee—F. C. Latimer, J. Belden, George W. Seymour, H. L. Kellogg, Elbert W. Atwood.

Collation Committee—Mrs. A. H. Merrill, Mrs. M. L. Stoddard, Mrs. C. L. Robbins, Mrs. H. M. Robbins, Mrs. Joanna Luce.

Music Committee—Mrs. Ellen S. Deming, Mrs. Herbert Macy, Mrs. Arthur Merrill.

DELEGATES.

Hartford Theological Seminary—Pres. Dr. Hartranft.

Berlin—Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Webster.

Meriden—First, T. W. Kilbourne, H. A. Curtis; Center, Rev. John H. Grant, Mrs. G. Crittenden, Mrs. C. N. Winslow.

Middletown—Third, Rev. D. B. Hubbard.

Kensington—Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Peck.

Farmington—Rev. Geo. L. Clark, Rev. Dr. J. W. Backus, Mrs. Lucy Woodruff.

Hartford—First, Rev. Dr. C. M. Lamson, Dea. Roland Swift; South, Rev. Magee Pratt.

New Britain—First, Rev. M. B. Boardman, Cornelius Andrews; South, J. H. Kirkham, Mrs M. R. Eddy.

Rocky Hill—Rev. H. H. Davies, Mrs. Louis Griswold.

Wethersfield—Rev. W. M. Baker, S. Frank Willard, F. A. Griswold.

West Hartford—Henry C. Butler, Wm. H. Hall.

Wallingford—Rev. J. J. Blair, A. D. Judd.

Plantsville—Geo. F. Smith, H. D. Smith.

Measure the significance of this period by the march of ecclesiastical events and we conclude that this has been a marvelous period in the history of Christendom. The development of modern missionary activity all falls within this period. The founding of the American Board and its first meeting in the parsonage of Dr. Porter of Farmington, during Dr. Brace's pastorate, brought this church into touch with the movement for evangelizing the nations and it has kept in touch and in generous support of that movement ever since. The organization of the Sunday school; rich discoveries in sacred antiquities, by which our knowledge of the original Scriptures has been wonderfully increased and great stimulus given to Bible study; the birth of the scientific spirit, with its passion for truth; the expansion of the conception of the church's mission in the world and its ready adaptation to every new need,—all these things fall within this period. The men and women of this church who have come and gone here have been identified with them and given a large hospitality and loyal support to every change that promised to speed on the Kingdom of God.

Changing our gaze now from this wide range and fixing it upon the local history, it seems as if here it was nothing but change that we saw. Everything appears in a state of flux. The fathers, where are they ? Where are their church, their forms of worship, their methods of activity ? We often say, they would not know the place, should they come back to it. They would be strangers in this building they erected, as much as if they had never lived here, could they step into it now.

There is not time to detail the history and it has been well done by others. My purpose is to select certain changes through which the church has passed and see how within all there were certain essential and undying elements. This is a church of the living God. If it be a live church, it will change. But it is the pillar and ground of the truth and so through all the changes, the truth will abide. There will be an element of permanency and unity, underneath and surviving every change.

First (to begin with that which is most external), this building has changed and its changes but mark the other changes of the organism. The first church was but a rough, unplastered, barn-like structure, and from the first there has been a steady evolution in the form and adaptations of the two buildings till we have this well-appointed, tasteful edifice. There is an advantage in a history like ours over

churches recently organized, in that we can see, step by step, the successive improvements. When a church is organized to-day, it starts off with all the things which have come to this church slowly and at great cost. It is just like the young couples to-day, who want to begin where their parents ended, in the possession of every modern convenience. But this church got its good things in the old-fashioned way, little by little. Why, they did not even have a pulpit and deacons' seat when Mr. Williams began his ministrations. And for some time the galleries were unfinished and there were no windows in the upper story.

And when the church was organized, "that solemnity," as Dr. Brace would say, was in an unfurnished building. For 80 years it was the spiritual home of this people. The snow sifted through the cracks, the swallows built their nests and twittered under the eaves. The building that followed was not much what it is to-day. For years it knew no heat except that from the living bodies of the worshipers. Those were the days when in winter the sermon could not only be heard; it could be seen pouring forth from the preacher's lips in wreaths of warm mist, that penetrated the frosty air. The communion bread would sometimes freeze on the plates. Judge Sewall, in his diary, pathetically records, "The communion bread was frozen pretty hard and rattled sadly into the plates."

And yet with all their uncouth surroundings, their discomforts, the icy temperature, the old meeting house was a temple of God. The sacred Shechinah, which lent a heavenly glory to the temple in Jerusalem, shined into the hearts of the worshipers. They never thought of suspending their devotions, or even shortening them. And such is the power of the spirit over matter that the weather-beaten beams and time-eaten timbers took on an attractiveness and a glory in the eyes of these devout souls. The building does not make the worship. It is the spirit of the worshipers; truer yet, it is the Spirit of the Living God, coming down into the midst of His saints and uniting them in the fellowship of Christ.

Second, a change of polity has taken place. Things were a good deal mixed in the early days as to principles and forms of church government and fellowship. It was inevitable. There was the church that had come over in the Mayflower, that had become in practice, if not in theory, a Congregational church, self-governing and recognizing only the authority of Christ. But the other churches of Massachusetts and Connecticut had a tincture of Presbyterianism about

them. And it was asserted in the Cambridge platform that the ordinary power of government belongs only to the elders. It took the free air of America and a clearer grasp of the truth that Christ reveals his will through the different members of his body to shake the churches loose from the vestiges of an aristocratic form of government and come on to the platform of a pure democracy in church affairs.

I think I discover vestiges of this Presbyterian form of government in the early history of this church. The records of the church are lost for the early days and so we have only hints. But I think the note made by Mr. Backus on one of the sermons of his that has come down to us, that it was "presented to ye reverend elders antecedent to my ordination," shows that the church had ruling elders. The society or parish called Mr. Backus, but those elders evidently had something to say as to whether he was the proper person to be settled over them. Then as late as 1809, in the last will and testament of Rosanna Deming, making a bequest to the Newington society, there is a clause, which hints again at some uncertainty in her mind as to just what this church was, whether it was Congregational or Presbyterian. The clause is that she gives and bequeaths to the ecclesiastical society in Newington such and such lands, the avails of them to be given to the Presbyterian or Congregational minister of said society. It took time, therefore, for the church to determine its own character.

Then when we consider the functions of the ecclesiastical society in the early times, we see what a change has taken place. It would cause a revolt in the church to-day if the society whose offices are now limited to the temporalities of the church, should attempt to do some of the things the Newington society once did without question. Something of the notion of a theocracy doubtless came in here and the union of church and state.

But the society in those early days was a kind of man of all work. It shrunk from nothing that needed to be done. It went ahead in a free and easy, large kind of way about everything, from laying a tax to calling a minister. It appointed the fast days, built and maintained the pound, had charge of the schools, established libraries, appointed constables, looked after the burying ground, selected sheep masters, received public bequests, petitioned the Legislature numberless times and did pretty much everything that had to be done. Here certainly is a change, for to-day the ecclesiastical society has become a kind of moribund affair,

whose decent death and burial have been provided for by legislative enactment and are actually taking place throughout the state.

The relation of the church with sister churches has been changed. The Consociation once existed, made up of pastors and one lay delegate from each church. It was a permanent body and, unlike a council, was supposed to have more than advisory powers. It gradually fell away and the church voted in 1862 to withdraw from that body, and in 1868 it was represented in a meeting which formed the Conference of churches to which we now belong, and whose churches were invited to this celebration.

The Half Way Covenant, that sad blunder of the fathers, left its traces upon our records and was attended by about the same unfortunate results as marked its course throughout New England. If you scan the records during Mr. Belden's ministry, you will be struck by the disproportion between baptisms and admissions to the church.

He baptized in the 58 years he was pastor 622 persons, but only received into full membership 169. The church at the close of his ministry only numbered 51. He gives a long list of those who simply owned the covenant, but did not come into full fellowship with the church and were not admitted to the communion. Now if you turn to the records of Dr. Brace, you will see how different the proportion between those baptized and those received to membership. He baptized 401 and received to membership 321.

There was only a difference of 60, while under Mr. Belden was a difference of 453. That tells the sad story of New England's decline when there were thousands of people in this merely formal, moral, half-way relation to the church, and the actual membership, who gave evidence of the regenerative power of the Spirit, was so meagre in comparison.

All credit is due to Mr. Belden and to the church of his time that they discovered their error so soon—sooner by many years than the churches in general. Dr. Walker affirms that as late as 1797 the system was still largely in operation among the churches and the last vestiges did not disappear till 1825-28. But as early as 1775, the Newington church abandoned it. The record says: "On motion of the pastor, the brethren and this church manifested their opinion that the practice of this and many other churches of New England, called the Half Way Covenant, was unwarrantable, not authorized by any scriptural precept or example, and therefore agreed that said practice should be laid aside in

this church." And the record of the last person so admitted appears for that year 1775.

For the benefit of the younger portion of the congregation I ought to explain what this practice was which was attended by such sad results. It came about because of the attitude of the church to the children of its members. They were regarded, having been baptized in infancy, as really members of the church, and saints. But when they grew older and some of them in character and life were not saintly at all, the question arose as to their relation to the church and the relation of their children. The desire was strong to extend to them the privileges of church membership, but they did not give evidence of a spiritual change and what should be done for them? The question was answered by a compromise. They might "own the covenant" and have their children baptized, but were not admitted to the privilege of voting or the communion and were not expected to have experienced God's converting grace. So there were two forms of the covenant, one for the full membership of those who gave evidence of a spiritual change, and the other, called Half Way, for those who only promised to do the best they could. It led to formalism and a trust in forms, wholly alien to Puritanism. And we see the strange spectacle of a people who had come out from the formalism of the established church, falling into a similar error themselves. It had a fearful effect in cheapening church membership and weakening the obligation of personal religion.

All this review shows how experimental and tentative things were in the early days. And it shows us that forms and methods are important after all. One might say of the parish system that it did not matter who did things, as long as they were done; but it did matter and when the Unitarian defection came, the churches of Massachusetts, with those old parishes in full control, found themselves turned out of doors, with no legal title to the building they had erected, or even the communion plate from which they had eaten the sacred emblems.

It made a difference as to what theories of church membership were held. The dearth in spiritual results, the depleted church membership, the formalism and immoralities of the Puritan decline, condemned the Half Way Covenant as an offense in the sight of heaven.

But through all their mistakes, the church lived. They were not sure what it ought to be called, Congregational, or Independent, or Presbyterian. They knew this, that it was

"the Church of Christ." They held on to that and studied the New Testament and found a way out of their difficulties. God had His faithful remnant and soon the breath of powerful revivals began to be felt upon the churches and such quickenings of conscience resulted, such illuminations of the written Word, as swept the unfortunate practices into oblivion.

Another change is noted in the worship of the church. It was very simple in the early time. There were no prayer meetings, in which women, as well as men, take part. In those days, the weekly meeting was a lecture. The congregation had very little part in the worship except to listen; the minister did it all. Responsive readings were unknown; even the reading of the Scripture without exposition was for a long time resisted. Such a thing as using the Lord's Prayer or reciting the Apostles' Creed would have horrified the good people and been taken as sure sign of Popery.

But if the congregation had no share, aside from the singing, the minister did not fail in his duty. The quantity was never stinted. Brevity of utterance either in prayer or sermon was not insisted on. The atmosphere might be at the freezing point, but the good man went on and on, to all his divisions and sub-divisions, absolutely prodigal in the use of time. Cotton Mather had over his study door the legend, "Be short," but he did not have it over his pulpit any more than other New England ministers and he records that at his ordinatian he prayed for an hour and a quarter and preached an hour and three quarters. That was a moderate length for a sermon, I suppose. Some ministers are reported to have turned the hour glass four times before they were through.

I estimate that Mr. Backus' sermon, preached in 1736, contains upward of 7000 words, three times the number in the longest I preach. Mr. Williams' sermon, that has come down to us, is quite moderate in length, though it was preached to the General Assembly, where ministers were not given to curtailing their exhortations to the legislators. As that sermon has not in it a single reference to the occasion, but is a doctrinal discourse on grace, I have no doubt it was preached first in Newington and that without change the good man thought it good enough for the Legislature.

But the people could sing if they had no other part of the worship and from the first much attention was given to church music. I suppose the Bay Psalm Book was first employed, the Dr. Watts Psalms and Hymns, as revised by Dr.

Dwight under authority of the General Association. In 1839 the people voted to drop Dwight's collection and adopt Dr. Watts entire. Dr. Watts has always been a favorite among hymn writers and his residence gave the place its name of Newington. To the credit of the past be it said there is no hint of such convulsions over changes in singing and introduction of instruments as wracked some places. Contention was hot in many a church when it came to dropping the custom of lining off the Psalms. Some resisted the innovation as stoutly as they resisted the British. One old soldier, when the choir had sung down the deacon in his attempts to line the hymn, rose in his might and, opening the Psalm book, said, "Now let the people of the Lord sing!"

That was a pathetic preamble to a vote in one town meeting, "That we take into consideration the broken state of this town with regard to singing on the Sabbath Day." In some places there was a compromise and lining off permitted at one service and omitted at the other. I suppose the explanation why changes were adopted here without a quarrel, and as fast as reason for them was shown, was the general intelligence of the people. It was not because they did not prize the service of song as much as other places that fought over the matter.

On the whole changes that have come in public worship have been improvements. The variety introduced, more even balance and unity of the parts, greater participation of the congregation, are all gains. The brevity we demand is not to be too much bemoaned. We may be in too much of a hurry to get through with our worship, but the fathers were certainly extremists, considering the shortness of this mortal life. We may cut down the number of verses we sing too much, but when a hymn was so long that a minister who had forgotten his sermon, and lived a quarter of a mile from church, could go after it and get back before the people got through the hymn he gave out, that was overdoing it. But the vital element of true worship was not wanting in the old days, whether the people did little or much, sang by rule or counter. They made melody with their hearts to the Lord, if they offended the laws of musical expression; and their souls went winging their way upward in true praise.

Changes in the organizations within the church I hardly need to mention. These have most of them come in our own day. The church and the society,—that was all at first. The Sunday service and the weekly lecture made up the list of religious exercises. Now multiplication of societies and

committees and meetings is the rule. Some of the organizations we could not surrender, so signally have they been owned of God. The Sunday school, the Endeavor society, the missionary circles,—they all seem essential to the activity of the church. But it helps us to go back to that early simplicity to see how, after all, religion is an individual matter between the soul and God, and it must be cultivated by the individual, and if it is not, no number of organizations can compensate for the loss of that vital, personal devotion of the soul.

So I might go on affirming the changes that have come in every department of church life.

There is hardly anything that has not changed as to its form and expression except the celebration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. That is one service in which the dead yonder, could they come out of their graves and join with us here, would feel at home, for formula and celebration are practically the same.

Even of the preaching, we cannot affirm that is quite the same. The same old gospel, but in quite a different dress and phraseology. This is inevitable. The sermons of yore were doctrinal treatises, that might have been taken out of some handbook of theology. They were theological arguments. They assumed a high average of intelligence on the part of the people. And they were fitted to the temper of the times, for, as Dr. Walker says, "Times have been, these indeed were of long continuance, when nothing would so stir the blood of a New England congregation as a thorough-going discussion of some controverted point in dogmatic divinity. Amid the alarms of Indian wars, and tumults of Revolutionary struggles, place and interest and absorbing attention could be found for the sharp distinctions of doctrinal analysis." But now a sermon that can be called doctrinal is a novelty.

I have read two of Mr. Williams' sermons, and one of Mr. Backus', and two of Dr. Brace's, and a change even in these, as you go from one to the other, can be noted. Mr. Williams leaned toward the school of theology called the "New Lights." Where Mr. Backus and Mr. Welden would be placed is difficult to say; probably in what was called the Old Calvanistic school. Dr. Brace was a thorough-going Calvanist as he affirms, but, while holding on to the great doctrines distinguished as Calvanistic, he was a progressive man in the temper of his mind. If there was any good thing which appeared in the unfolding of Providence, there was a large hospitality for it in Dr. Brace's bosom. I unearthed a

sermon of his preached before the Peace Society in West Hartford, the other day, and there are views there on the adoption of arbitration in place of settling disputes by war, which would not have been out of place in the discussion recently held in the United States Senate.

But the preaching of the early days differed from the preaching of to-day in other points besides its doctrinal character. It was more daring. It was more philosophical. It was harsher. It never shied off, as do we, from great problems. The modes of the divine existence, the eternal decrees, the nature of man's freedom, the consequences of a final rejection of the gospel,—it never went 'round any of these themes, it grappled with them.

But the merit of the old time sermons was their biblical character. They made their appeal to Scripture. Their hearers had the privilege, if they did not accept the positions advanced, to search the Scriptures to see if these things were so. And above all, the preaching of the past, and all the preaching in this church, has had the heart of the gospel in it, the proclamation of salvation through the mediation and sacrifice of Christ. Mr. Williams might be a New Divinity man, and Mr. Belden an Old Calvanist; Mr. Backus might sympathize with the condemnation of Whitefield (which is one of the unenviable episodes of the General Association when it met in Newington in 1745), and, in spite of that action, Mr. Belden afterward received Whitefield to his house and went with him when he preached in Farmington. The successive ministers might thus differ from each other on points of expediency, and they might have a different phraseology and a different philosophy; but when it came to man's sinful condition, God's provision in Christ and the regenerative influences of the Holy Spirit, they are at one. They stand in the same fellowship.

This has been one of the glories of this church from the beginning. It has had a pure gospel preached. It has been in this community the pillar and ground of the truth, and no one of the generations that have come and gone, many of whom sleep in God's Acre yonder, could have failed to have heard of the way of salvation through faith in a crucified and risen Redeemer. Here is the unity within all the changes. This is what constitutes this a Church of Christ through all its 175 years of history,—that the gospel has been preached and lived.

Has this seemed a somewhat dry and tedious narrative? I know it needs the kindling touch of your imaginations to

give it interest. The records of the past do not fairly reflect the church life. A vote to build a church, to buy a drum; to pay Widow Andrus one pound and 12 shillings for sweeping our meeting house; to pay the minister's rate in wheat at six shillings, rye at four shillings and six-pence, and Indian corn at four shillings per bushel; that the committee shall appoint three several days between now and the first of March for carrying the minister's wood; that the committee seat the meeting house by list, age, parentage and usefulness,—all these are items of interest, but they are only the bones of the history.

Dates and votes and petitions, these give a poor reflection of the struggles, the sacrifices, the heartaches, the warm enthusiasms, the actual life of the past. There are little touches here and there which show how human they were, those serious, solemn people. It seems that some of them were inclined to cheat the minister on his wood pile, and so a society meeting voted to appoint a committee to watch the loads of wood, and see that full loads were drawn. But the penchant for driving a sharp bargain, that undying characteristic of Yankee folks, came out in one transaction, when they fixed upon the month of August as the month when the equivalent in grain for the minister's salary should be reckoned, that being the month in the year when grain was highest. But the minister was not caught napping, and diplomatically suggested that, as that was the month when grain bore the highest price, it might be ground of uneasiness to some, and so he would pitch upon the month of June as coming betwixt the extremes.

I cannot help feeling drawn closer to these people, when any little weakness or disability appears. And so, while I feel far enough away from Mr. Williams when I read his stilted phrases, and recall his majestic presence, I am drawn quite near to him when I learn of his resigning from the rectorship of Yale because violent headaches had been growing upon him. Headaches! Why, if we had not come upon some such record as this, we should never have dreamed they ever had any kind of an ache. And then the poverty of Mr. Backus, how pathetic that was! He often carried a load of anxiety into the pulpit. And, finally, he was so sore perplexed, that they sent up a petition to the General Assembly, always their resort in a tight place, setting forth that, as they had lost their first pastor to Yale college, who had a good and large estate of his own, and so could serve them much cheaper in the ministry than any other, and their present minister

only had a small settlement, and did run considerably into debt, and was daily exposed to be sued, they would like their country rates released for four years, that they might relieve their reverend pastor in his difficulties.

And sorrow came in those days just as it comes to-day, with its smiting stroke. The record is very meagre of those afflictions, and time has almost obliterated it. But how much it meant, when we read, "Died, my second daughter Anne," and then, only three years after, "Died my eldest daughter Martha." And the infant mortality; it must have been fearful, judging by the old records, and a great majority of the mounds in yonder yard were very little ones, for the children. But we must not linger over these things which bind the past and the present together in loving sympathy. The old days were not all good, any more than ours are all bad. There is the mingling of light and shadow. And we see a steady gain in many particulars. But ours is not the glory. We stand upon the shoulders of the past. We begin at the point to which the fathers toiled with painful step and slow.

The thing that kept them true, that led them on, that enabled them to correct their mistakes, was that glory of Puritanism, loyalty to the written Word. They tested everything by that, theories and practice and life itself, and so they did their grand work. We can follow in their steps, transmit the inheritance they have bequeathed to us, only as we have a like loyalty to God's revelation of truth in Christ.

The Two Meeting Houses.

Roger Welles.

THE FIRST MEETING HOUSE.

The town of Wethersfield, at a town meeting, Dec. 24, 1712, voted to grant the petition of those persons that inhabited the west divisions of lands in the town, "that they should be a distinct parish by themselves for the carrying on the worship of God amongst themselves." At the same meeting a committee was appointed "to look out a convenient place on the commons between the two last divisions, whereon the west farmers shall erect their meeting house."

This committee, on January 8, 1713, viewed several places in the commons between the two west divisions and selected a site "on that piece of cleared land adjacent to the house of Joseph Hurlbut and John Griswold, westerly, about the middle of said land, on the west side of a small black oak tree." The committee made their report to a town meeting held March 23, 1713, when their report was accepted. The parish was incorporated in May, 1713. This choice of the site was confirmed by the committee of the General Court in a report made to that body in October, 1715, and accepted and an act was passed to carry it into effect.

There was some opposition to the site, however, from the south end of the parish, then called Beckley Quarter. The frame of the church was raised in April, 1716, on a location a few rods southeast of the site of the present meeting house. At a society meeting held May 6, 1716, a committee was appointed "to take care to cover the meeting house." When this was done an attempt was made to remove the meeting house farther south. At a town meeting held Dec. 10, 1718, the following action was taken:

"The town did then by vote release the inhabitants of the West Society, in said Wethersfield, from paying their part in the ministerial charge for the year past upon this condition; that they convene and consent that their meeting house should be brought to John Waples' Hill. It is to be understood by ministerial charge, the charge for the support of the minister in Wethersfield." (2 Wethersfield Town Votes, 5.)

This appeal to the pockets of our Newington fathers did not succeed. The meeting house was not removed. When the question of its removal was finally settled, the society, at a meeting held April 21, 1720, voted "to get hewed planks and lay a floor in our meeting house and to get window frames and glass for the lower tier of windows and also to make doors for our meeting house." A committee was appointed to carry this vote into effect.

At a society meeting held May 3, 1720, it was voted to substitute pine boards for planks for the floor and to get two summers and joists. In 1678 a saw mill had been established at the north end of the mill pond in the center of Newington and a saw mill path led from the mill to the site of the church, a little more than a quarter of a mile, so that pine boards could be easily obtained. Dr. Joseph Andrus and James Francis were appointed a committee to buy the boards. When these votes had been passed and perhaps had actually

been carried into effect, the society, on Aug. 5, 1720, made choice of Rev. Elisha Williams to be their minister and appointed a committee to agree with him as to his settlement and maintenance. In the meantime, on Sept. 15, 1720, the society voted to make hollow walls to the meeting house and appointed a committee "to lath and plaster said walls" and another committee to lay the floor of the meeting house. On Dec. 6, 1720, the society appointed a new committee, consisting of Samuel Hunn and John Camp, to treat with Mr. Williams, "in order to a settlement and make return to this Society," and they were also to endeavor to get a piece of land for him from the town.

This committee made a successful arrangement with Mr. Williams and the terms of his settlement were formally ratified by the society on Dec. 21, 1720. Liberty was granted to Mr. Williams on Feb. 16, 1721, to make a seat or pew for his family in the meeting house.

The town on March 6, 1721, made a grant of eight acres of land to Mr. Williams "to be laid out in the common land, near to the Widow Elizabeth Andrus' dwelling house, northwestwardly."

For the next year the society were so busy in building a house and barn for Mr. Williams, that there is no record of anything being done toward the completion of the meeting house.

On Feb. 8, 1722, the society voted to lay out 50 pounds in the meeting house, "to build a pulpit and deacon seat, and to prepare timber and nails for the finishing the lower part of our meeting house." On Sept. 5, 1722, it was voted to put the windows that were in the lower part of the meeting house in the upper part, and make new windows for the lower part.

On Sept. 12, 1722, the society voted to hold a fast on Wednesday, Oct. 3, 1722, to implore divine assistance in gathering a church here, and in the ordination of Mr. Williams, which was appointed for Wednesday, Oct. 17, 1722.

The point to which the meeting house had then been completed seems to have been about as follows: The floor had been laid, a pulpit and deacon seat had been built, and probably rude seats for the people; the walls were not yet plastered up to the galleries, as ordered. No floors had been laid in the galleries. The walls above the galleries were not lathed or plastered. Overhead two huge beams, called summers, crossed from plate to plate, and upon them were laid the joists, but they were not lathed or plastered. No windows had yet been put in the upper story as had been order-

ed. There was no paint upon the house inside or out. Under these unfinished conditions of the meeting house the church was organized and Mr. Williams ordained in October, 1722.

On March 1, 1723, another vote was passed "to fill the walls and lath and plaster the lower part of our meeting house."

On Dec. 1, 1723, the prudential committee was instructed to purchase a drum, and thereafter we may imagine the pastor accompanied to the meeting house at the morning and afternoon service on the Sabbath, and on lecture days, by the measured beat of the drum, followed by the gathering people, to hear him beat the drum ecclesiastic in his pulpit.

On Jan. 6, 1726, it was voted, "to provide all joists and boards for the galleries' floor of our meeting house, and to lathe and plaster the walls of our meeting house up to the plate, and the new windows to be put up below, and the present windows of our meeting house to be put up above."

This was all that had been done towards the completion of the meeting house in the ten years since it had been raised.

Mr. Williams ceased to act as pastor in May, 1726, having been chosen rector of Yale college. His successor, Rev. Simon Backus, was called "upon probation for our minister," by vote passed May 25, 1726. A positive call was voted on Aug. 24, 1726, and he was ordained Jan. 25, 1727, 170 years ago. When Mr. Backus was ordained the galleries of the meeting house were still unfinished, the walls above the galleries and overhead were not lathed or plastered, and so remained for at least seven or eight years longer.

On Dec. 16, 1734, the society voted, "to finish the galleries in our meeting house, and lath and plaster the walls up to the plates and beams, and lath and plaster our meeting house overhead, and to glass the lower windows of our meeting house."

When this was done the meeting house was considered completed, as no further votes are recorded relating to it, except ordinary repairs. It does not appear to have had a steeple, or ever to have been painted.

On Dec. 2, 1765, it was voted, "that the seats be taken up in the meeting house, and pews be made in the body of the meeting house," which was the first material change made. The house was then nearly fifty years old.

On Dec. 12, 1770, it was voted, "that men and their wives be seated together." Before that date the sexes had

been separated during divine service. Perhaps it was thought that the high pews would hide from public observation all undevotional conduct, and so prevent interference with the public worship of others. Capt. Daniel Willard, in his reminiscences, says: "The old meeting house was very much dilapidated. When a child I watched the swallows as they flew in and out, where some clapboards had fallen off near the ridge, chirping and twittering to their young, in their nests under the ridge pole." This would indicate that the ridge pole was in sight of the audience; if so, the vote to lath and plaster overhead had never been carried into effect. He says further: "The house was not finished inside except the pulpit, pews, galleries and gallery stairs, which were at the northeast and southeast corners of the house. Children were often seated on the stairs, in full view of their parents and the minister. The tithing men had the oversight of those in the galleries.

"There was a very wide sounding board over the pulpit, suspended in part by an iron rod running from the board to the side of the house. I was not the only child who was afraid that the rod would break or draw from its fastenings, and let the sounding board fall on the minister's head." ("Annals." pp. 143-4.) Such was the humble temple where the gospel was preached for nearly 80 years by Williams, Backus, and Belden, as settled pastors, and occasionally by Rev. Nathaniel Burnham of Kensington, Rev. Timothy Edwards of East Windsor, the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, author of the famous treatise on the will, and other ministers of the neighboring churches. When Mr. Belden was settled in 1747, there were 151 members of the church, and less than 70 families in the parish, which proves that the power of religion pervaded the hearts of the people, despite the poverty which surrounded them.

THE SECOND MEETING HOUSE.

The first movement toward building the second meeting house was made at a society meeting held Dec. 14, 1779, when the society committee were instructed to warn a meeting "to consider about building a new meeting house or repairing the old one."

Such a meeting was held on Jan. 26, 1780, which was adjourned from time to time, but nothing was done except to order repairs upon the old meeting house. At a meeting held Dec. 6, 1784, the society committee were again in-

structed to warn a meeting "for the purpose of agreeing upon building a new meeting house, or repairing the old one." Such a meeting was duly called, and was held Dec. 20, 1784, when it was voted, "by a majority of more than two-thirds of the voters, to build a new meeting house for divine worship." At that time the law required application to be made to the county court, to fix the site of a new meeting house.

The county court, on such application, would usually appoint a committee to select a site after a hearing of all parties and an inspection of the various proposed sites.

The society appointed a committee to apply to the court for a committee to make the selection, and ordered a survey and plan of the society to be made, to be laid before them.

The site chosen was near the dwelling house of Luther Latimer on Back Lane, southwest of the mill pond.

On Oct. 12, 1785, this site was formally disapproved, by vote of the society. On Oct. 25, 1785, it was voted to make a second application to the court for another committee to fix the site. On this application Blinn's hill was selected. This hill is in the fields southwest of the present parsonage. On Dec. 19, 1785, this site was also disapproved by the society.

On Oct. 29, 1787, it was voted to made a third application to the court for a new committee to fix a site, and the society named the committee of non-residents to be nominated to the court as satisfactory to the society. This committee, appointed by the court, "pitched a stake" for the site in James Lusk's lot, "by the school house," about where the house of Edwin Welles now stands.

On April 14, 1788, this site was approved, 40 yeas to 33 nays. This majority was not decisive enough to settle the question. Greater unanimity was desired and on March 31, 1789, a committee was appointed to measure the society and compute as nearly as possible the center of travel. This committee set a stake a little southeast of the first site selected by the court on Back Lane. September 21, 1789, the society voted to build on this location. The building did not materialize, however.

The society determined to make another attempt at harmony. February 2, 1790, a committee of nine from all parts of the parish, representing all interests, was appointed to agree on a site and report. This committee apparently reported in favor of a site in the fields near the burying ground, for Feb. 16, 1790, the society voted to build on that

site, and "to have a highway laid out, running North West from the old Meeting House, leaving the Burying Yard North of said highway." The vote would indicate that the site was either south or west of the burying yard. The difficulty of laying out a highway complicated a matter sufficiently involved and intricate of itself, and this project failed.

March 2, 1790, another committee was appointed to form a plan, "in order to reconcile the society," and to report. They apparently reported in favor of the site in James Lusk's lot, near the school house, and a vote was passed to build there. This was the second time that site had been approved. Nothing was done, however, to carry the vote into effect.

April 9, 1790, an advisory committee chosen from neighboring parishes was appointed "to determine where said house ought to stand," and "to use their influence to reconcile and unite the society."

This committee performed the delicate duty confided to them, and agreed on a site "near the west end of the burying yard."

This site was approved April 15, 1790, by 25 yeas to 19 nays. A new difficulty now presented itself. The county court had the final word on choice of site, and their approval must be obtained, to make the selection legal. A committee was appointed May 25, 1790, to apply to the court to establish the location thus selected. Before this was accomplished the society, Oct. 25, 1790, revoked the votes to build there, and to appoint the committee to apply to the court. This of course left the whole matter "all at sea."

The prospect of harmony seemed hopeless. The "dim and shadowy future" was confronting them, but what it portended was beyond their mortal ken. The peace of despair reigned supreme for nearly a year, without the word "meeting house" being mentioned in the records.

July 7, 1791, another attempt was made to settle the vexed question.

Capt. Martin Kellogg laid before the meeting his written obligation to give 90 pounds toward the frame of a meeting house, to be located on the west side of the old green, where the present edifice stands.

This was met on the instant by a counter obligation in writing signed by Lieut. Lemuel Whittlesey, promising to give 100 pounds for the new building, if it should be located near the first site, by Luther Latimer's.

The meeting accepted Capt. Kellogg's proposal, 24 yeas to 14 nays, and a committee was appointed to apply to the county court to establish this site. This was the fourth application to that honorable tribunal. The judges of the court at that time were Stephen M. Mitchell of Wethersfield, chief judge; John Treadwell of Farmington, John Chester of Wethersfield, Roger Newberry of Windsor, and Thomas Seymour of Hartford. The two Wethersfield judges were disqualified by interest to act. The other three judges came to Newington and personally viewed the society and heard all parties concerned. Two of these judges concurred in fixing the site near Luther Latimer's, overruling the vote of the society, and they passed an imperative order that the house should be erected at that place. This judgment was spread upon the records of the society. It was rendered at the time of the court held on the third Tuesday of January, 1792.

The society acted very promptly, and at a meeting held Feb. 6, 1792, disapproved of the judgment of the court, 49 to 20.

March 13, 1792, the society voted to apply to the General Assembly to obtain, if possible, the site on the old green, which had been agreed upon. Agents were appointed to make the application. A memorial or petition was presented to the Assembly which stated the case very fully in favor of the old green. The Assembly appointed a committee to view the society, hear all parties concerned and report.

This committee reported in accordance with the vote of the society, in favor of the old green. The Assembly accepted the report, and passed a resolution to carry it into effect, in October, 1792. At a meeting of the society held Dec. 31, 1792, this resolve was approved, 39 to 3. Apparently those opposed to that location did not attend the meeting. The victors were disposed to be magnanimous, and renewed attempts were made to reconcile opposing interests.

Jan. 9, 1794, the society voted to cast lots between the three sites near Luther Latimer's, on Blinn's hill, and on the old green. The lots were cast, and we can imagine the breathless interest of our fathers, as they awaited the decision of this appeal to the Lord of all the earth. The announcement was made that the lot fell on Blinn's hill. The meeting loyally accepted this decision, and voted to build upon that eminence. A meeting was held Jan. 21, 1794, on Blinn's hill itself, in the open air, when the precise spot was selected and a stake driven, to be enclosed by the new structure. A committee was appointed to apply to the town

for highways to accommodate the inhabitants in getting to church, for there was no road to Blinn's hill. This would necessarily take time, and delays are dangerous. This case proved no exception to the rule.

Dec. 22, 1794, a committee was appointed to find the center of the land, lists, polls, and travel, and make a center out of these four centers, and it was voted to build the house at the nearest convenient place to this grand center.

Jan. 5, 1795, the committee reported in favor of a site in Abel Andrus' lot. He lived in the old Andrus house south of the pound. This report was accepted and the usual committee appointed to apply to the court or Assembly for liberty to build on this new location. This committee failed to go either to the court or Assembly, and, April 14, 1795, the old green was again chosen as the Hill of Zion where the temple for divine worship should be located. This was the third time this location had been chosen, but it was again repudiated. Jan. 5, 1796, when it was voted to build either at Luther Latimer's or at the green,—that one to be chosen which should receive the largest amount of subscriptions.

At a meeting held Jan. 26, 1796, the subscriptions were closed, when the account footed up in favor of the site near Luther Latimer's. Here again a new difficulty presented itself. The Legislature had decided in favor of the old green. Could this decision be set aside by the society? It was determined, in this dilemma, to send another committee to the Assembly to get the necessary order to build at the last place chosen.

March 29, 1796, such a committee was appointed, and they presented a memorial to the Assembly, but that body failed to grant the petition.

June 17, 1796, the site at the west end of the burying ground was chosen conditionally. The condition was not complied with.

Feb. 20, 1797, it was voted to build at Blinn's hill and to move the timber there.

April 27, 1797, the site on the Lusk lot was again chosen, by subscription.

May 22, 1797, the site on the old green was again chosen, and the timber for the frame was ordered moved there, and a building committee appointed.

June 12, 1797, the same site was again chosen.

Aug. 7, 1797, it was voted that the foundation stones of the old house be applied to the new.

Aug. 28, 1797, the site on the green was again chosen.

As this was the fourth meeting in succession which adhered to this site, the question was considered finally settled, and the wearisome controversy at an end.

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The first church bell was not put into position till Feb. 9, 1828. The tall spire was taken down August 4, 1837; and the church, after extensive repairs, was formally dedicated August 23, 1837.

Dr. Brace preached in the morning from Haggai ii: 9, "The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." There were in that congregation many who remembered the "former house," and the contests over the location of the "latter house" and no doubt devoutly rejoiced in the "glory of this latter house" as compared with the poverty of the former house, and the prospect of peace which then seemed assured. That prophecy has been since fulfilled.

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They may have been influenced by the inspired words: "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."—Prov. xvi: 33. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."—Psa. cxxvii: 1.

Changes in Newington Church.

Dea. Levi S. Deming.

We meet to review the work of our fathers in building this church edifice.

We say it is 100 years old, but without the definite idea of its duration time. It will help us to remember that it covers all but 22 years of our national life. Why, it is less than 19 such periods since angels were singing the birthday song of Jesus, the son of Mary, our Saviour.

In my early years, I was with many who talked about the time and way in which this house was built. My own life runs back to within 20 years of the date. I was 20 before any alterations, and hence have a distinct remembrance of this building as at first made. To describe it briefly is the part assigned to me.

The hewn timbers of the frame were massive and furnished by citizens. The house was well built upon its present foundation and "no stone out of the wall cries out, and no beam of the timber answers it in controversy and strife." The building was in a parallelogram form with a square tower in front, rising from the ground to the bell deck and surmounted with a very plain spire.

The clapboards that covered the building were split from logs and shaved by hand, about six feet in length, with shiplapped ends and fastened in place by nails wrought upon home anvils. The windows were of large size, but with small lights of glass and in two stories, upper and lower.

There were three entrance ways to the audience room—one with double doors through the front tower and one direct from the outside, north and south of it. In the tower, also, were the gallery stairs on the right and left of the entrance way.

As was common in that day, the largest timbers of the frame were in sight as you entered the audience room. They were cased with pine boards, but unpainted. On the side walls, the posts stood like pillars between the windows and on the end wall all the large timbers were seen. The spaces between and the overhead ceiling had a lath and plaster covering.

The floor was divided by three aisles. The center or broad aisle led from the front porch; the side aisles from the outside doors. The seats were benches upon three sides of

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We meet to review the work of our fathers in building this church edifice.

We say it is 100 years old, but without the definite idea of its duration time. It will help us to remember that it covers all but 22 years of our national life. Why, it is less than 19 such periods since angels were singing the birthday song of Jesus, the son of Mary, our Saviour.

In my early years, I was with many who talked about the time and way in which this house was built. My own life runs back to within 20 years of the date. I was 20 before any alterations, and hence have a distinct remembrance of this building as at first made. To describe it briefly is the part assigned to me.

The hewn timbers of the frame were massive and furnished by citizens. The house was well built upon its present foundation and "no stone out of the wall cries out, and no beam of the timber answers it in controversy and strife." The building was in a parallelogram form with a square tower in front, rising from the ground to the bell deck and surmounted with a very plain spire.

The clapboards that covered the building were split from logs and shaved by hand, about six feet in length, with shiplapped ends and fastened in place by nails wrought upon home anvils. The windows were of large size, but with small lights of glass and in two stories, upper and lower.

There were three entrance ways to the audience room—one with double doors through the front tower and one direct from the outside, north and south of it. In the tower, also, were the gallery stairs on the right and left of the entrance way.

As was common in that day, the largest timbers of the frame were in sight as you entered the audience room. They were cased with pine boards, but unpainted. On the side walls, the posts stood like pillars between the windows and on the end wall all the large timbers were seen. The spaces between and the overhead ceiling had a lath and plaster covering.

The floor was divided by three aisles. The center or broad aisle led from the front porch; the side aisles from the outside doors. The seats were benches upon three sides of

square boxes or pews, with floors raised above the aisles. In a full assembly, one-third must sit with backs to the minister.

The galleries were high and broad upon three sides of the room and nearly covered the part below. The front seat of the galleries extended around the whole and had back of it an aisle that was two steps above it. Upon a still higher floor was a row of square pews like those below.

The singers occupied the front gallery opposite the pulpit and were numerous enough to extend the row on either side right and left. Back of the singers and between the gallery doors was a noted pew called the "high pew." The heads only of those seated there could be seen by the minister or any one in the audience. It was not always occupied by Sabbath keeping young men, for it was said that sometimes cards were played and wine drunk during the sermon.

The pulpit was a high box and reached by stairs on either side exposed to view. Back of it was a window with a circular top. It had hanging before it a green slat curtain that became dilapidated and was removed. One hot Sabbath afternoon the sun's rays beat vehemently upon the head and back of the preacher and he had to move from his place. He said to some of us after the service, "I couldn't stand it—the sweat ran down into my boots." We couldn't stand it either, and a few of us placed at the window that week handsome outside blinds. This, so far as I know, was the first change ever made in the appearance of the room.

In front of the pulpit, at the head of the broad aisle, was a special seat occupied by the deacons during the service preceding the communion. On its front was a hinged shelf that was raised to receive the memorial bread and wine of the sacramental service.

Such is the description of this place of worship as built in 1797, and as it continued until rearranged in the year 1837. It had no preparation for lighting in a dark night and no arrangement for heating in a cold day, yet it was an honorable structure and far in advance of the one preceding it.

It was during the ministry of Dr. Brace that two important changes were made in the church edifice and in different years. The first was in 1837, the second in 1853. Faithful men in each instance took the contracts for materials and work and the improvements were well made. For about 40 years after erection, the spire had pointed upward, exposed to wind and storm and with only its first meager coat of paint. It swayed in the wind with loosened joints and decay had commenced.

A heavy iron rod ran from the ground, with knuckle joints, not fastened to the building until reaching the spire, and made its highest termination in three-forked prongs for the use of the lightning. It was a grand feat for the boys to climb upward on that rod, by holding it firmly with hand over hand, and with feet making step by step on the side of the building. One boy, more daring than others, reached the bell deck and his fame at the same time.

But the spire must come down, and the task of removing it was committed to Robert Rockwell, then a young man. He took his ax and his saw to the open bell deck, where the spire stood upon its eight bare posts, and felled it as unconcernedly as he would have cut a large tree in the woods. A strained rope had inclined it toward the street, and the two posts on that side were first sawed squarely through, to make a supporting base from which the spire might topple to its fall when all other posts were successively cut. And when the last blow of the ax was struck, it sailed off magnificently into space and plunged earthward to its own destruction. Striking the ground in a horizontal position it crushed into splinters and the event furnished the crowd of witnesses an hour of excitement.

Instead of the spire the tower received an additional section that covered the heretofore open bell deck. The outside doors on the right and left of the tower were closed and the double doors in front greatly enlarged. Only these changes were made upon the outside at that time.

But within, the gallery stairs were taken out of the tower porch and enough of the audience room taken in to admit of rebuilding the stairs in the corners of the new part. The square pews were removed and plain slips built upon the floor in the audience room. The wide and high galleries were lowered and lessened in width and supplied with new seats. The front breastwork was made new, as were the square posts beneath it. The pulpit was also lowered and rebuilt, but the side walls and overhead ceiling were not changed.

Sixteen years later, a large amount was expended and large improvements were secured. A new frame surrounded the tower in front and brought out the corners of the building to its present form and size. The part of the tower left above the roof was newly covered and another section added to the height. The entire building was newly covered also with cornices and casings and clapboards, without removing the old. New window frames and large glass were used.

The edifice outside had the appearance of being entirely new.

The inside improvement was equally great. The windows were closed in the west end wall and the large timbers of the frame concealed by a level surface, with only one arched panel behind the pulpit. The projecting posts of the side walls were hewed back, and all walls and overhead ceiling covered by new lath and plastering, but yet without removing the old.

The east gallery was moved still farther back and the audience room very much enlarged in that direction. A handsome breastwork and turned posts completed the gallery front. A very good pattern of fresco work covered all walls and ceiling, giving to the room as finished the appearance of one newly built, on the inside as well as outside.

The additional covering within and without greatly strengthened the building. Before that was done heavy winds would bring perceptible vibrations and sometimes a weird creaking music, not agreeable to listening ears.

The house was rededicated when these improvements were completed and Dr. Todd in his address told our citizens that, when tired of the new coverings, they could remove them and have back again the old.

That day has never come, for all these changes were well approved, and many others more recent have kept pace with advancing society. One member only objected at the time the frescoing was done, and his objection was that it was "out of keeping with plain slips and a country congregation." We smiled at his criticism, but couldn't help noticing that the improvements did help Dr. Brace to preach the Gospel and the spiritually minded to profit thereby.

One other feature of change in the building I must particularly notice, for many of our oldest members will remember a small room prepared in the second story of the tower, over the porch, for the Monday evening meeting of Dr. Brace's Bible class.

The first change of which I have spoken, by moving the gallery stairs, gave it a place; but the second great change brought it into the audience room as at present. Dr. Brace in that little room harvested for his Master precious fruits. Here also was weekly gathered an infant class of the Sunday school, and in seasons of religious revival it was often filled with inquirers after the way of life. It continued to be much used until, as I have said, it was included in the audience room.

Looking at the present structure you notice as the recent improvements the long windows, the improved slips, the newer frescoing, the new platform and desk, the new singing gallery and organ (a generous gift), the heating and lighting provisions,—all woven in very happily as features of a well-appointed place of worship.

And last, but not least, the splendid additions of the last year, that place our church edifice well abreast of those building at the present day.

A century old! Yes, and good for another, unless a greatly increased community so crowd the courts of the Lord as imperatively to demand enlargement.

Church Music of the Century.

John G. Stoddard.

What was the music, and who were the singers, in this meeting house, 100 years ago?

If we consult the ecclesiastical record we find only a little about the church music, the choir, or the chorister; but many votes concerning the meeting house, the minister, and the minister's salary. Occasionally there is a record of a small sum appropriated to defray the expense of a singing school to bring in new recruits for the choir.

About the time this meeting house was built, there was a vote of the society appointing John Kirkham leader of the music. Perhaps we may be warranted in assuming that he was the first man to make a musical sound, or pitch a tune in the new building. This John Kirkham was a progenitor. Men are said to live in a long line of descendants. In this sense John Kirkham is not gone, and he may yet pitch many tunes. In this sense he has been alive during the whole century. He came down from Springfield and made the new bass viol boom, and his son Albert came at one time to show how a violin would sound in the Newington meeting house. Then John Kirkham managed the double bass before he was taken down with the gold fever, and since, in female disguise, he has presided at the cabinet organ and the pipe organ very acceptably.

How long Chorister Kirkham blew the pitch pipe or marked time for the Newington choir I cannot tell.

Directly after the erection of this meeting house there was a period of 25 years for which time it is difficult to relate anything accurate and interesting about the music.

I have examined several old music books published about that time, and those indicate what music was performed on Sunday in the meeting house. There was the Bridgewater Collection, and I have a collection of music published previous to this, worn and yellow with age. Probably this was the book of 100 years ago when Kirkham was leader. In that old book, without cover and without date, I find some of the good old tunes sung slowly by our Puritan ancestors before the Mayflower first crossed the ocean, Windsor, Rochester, Little Marlboro, Wells, Old Hundred, Mear, Dundee, China and others. In that old book I find some anthems. Also what elderly people called "set pieces."

I can have faith that there was powerful singing in this meeting house 100 years ago. When the people were joyful, thankful and glad, as was King David when he danced, they sang a fugue; when they were cast down and the world seemed dark, they sang tunes in the minor key; and when their hearts swelled with lofty praise and adoration, what better could they do than sing Old Hundred? Indeed, what better can we do now, after having heard the best of Handel, Hayden and Mendelssohn?

The grandfathers and grandmothers had first treble, second treble and bass, counter and tenor. At the beginning of the century, there was not much private musical instruction. Pianos were scarcer than four-leaved clover, but all the girls knew how to play on the spinning wheel. The singing school was a necessary institution. Now let us consult with the oldest man in regard to what has happened in his day. Some persons now living remember Col. Joseph Camp, who, 70 years ago and some years previous, was leader of music. The singers were the men and women of about his own age.

Then Gen. Martin Kellogg was leader for a short period. Don't you remember how anxiously he gave the pitch without an instrument, and had confidence that his daughter Mary would help him out? When Gen. Kellogg resigned, the leadership went very naturally and properly to the heir apparent, his son Laurens, and his was a long, successful reign like that of Queen Victoria. It was the period familiar to those churchgoers who are now old or middle-aged.

This is a part of church history. Historians mention the rulers, the generals, the epochs, and the battles. Not much is written about the common people. Now, in this our little musical history, who made up the rank and file? If you are an elderly man, say 70 or 75 years, you know that three co-related families in this place consisted of seven children each. Three times seven are 21. The members of these families were mostly singers. Let us skip the surnames and speak of them as kings and queens in Europe. Let us gaze back at the singers' seats of 40, 50, 60 years ago.

Do you hear the rings rasp on the iron rod, as those red curtains are drawn?

That is a token, and means that the sweet singers of Israel are making preparations. They sound the key note. They rise. The members of the congregation rise and turn around. Ah, my elderly friend, whom did you see, and whom did you hear? Do you remember Fanny, Charlotte, Julia, Abbie, Electa, Edwin, Roger, Laurens, Samuel, Mary, Sarah, Charles, Elbert, Thomas, John, Harriet, Mary, Julia? During half a century, you could not look up without seeing some of those familiar faces. And there were others. Who will forget Nancy? You can think of those singers as young; the ladies with flaring bonnets, flowers inside, and the young gentlemen with black satin waistcoats. Thirty members of the Newington choir. Those singers of 50 years ago (those who have not gone to the promised land) may be seen in the congregation now-a-days; a little bald, or slightly gray; and they know good singing when they hear it. And now a word about the instrumental music. About 50 years ago, E. M. Stoddard played the flute. This was the first of the instruments. Then a double bass viol was purchased, played successively by J. S. Kirkham, Stephen Saunders and Rufus Stoddard.

George T. Davis played the violin. Then came the cabinet organ, and next the pipe organ. We might be very emphatic in saying that the organ has been, is now, and ever shall be well played; but this does not need saying. It is a self-evident truth, an axiom.

After all, what has been remarkable about Newington church music? It has been about like the music in the Congregational churches of surrounding towns. Newington keeps along with the procession, even if the procession is ahead.

What was the most striking feature of Newington Congregational music 50 years ago? I warrant that a boy

with a musical ear, or a stranger in the congregation, would say Mr. Brace and Mrs. Josiah Atwood singing Old Hundred after sacramental communion. It seemed to me, when a youth, that those two voices were the warp, and that the others were merely filling.

Is there a bass singer in Newington now, who can put in the power of the half-century parson? Or is there a soprano singer who can give the octave slide like Mrs. Atwood? "If any, speak, for him have I offended."

Coming now to the church music of these latter years, the purchase and the erection of the church organ challenges our notice, and ought not to be lightly passed over. The organ is a benefaction and a memorial. It was placed in the church through the liberality of a family, and presented to the society as a free-will gift, in memory of a husband and a father passed away.

Among all the musical instruments devised by man, none touches so many chords: none gives such a still small voice, or swells with such resounding power of praise as the organ. Its tones seem sacred.

Mr. Aiken in one of his sermons spoke of the spirits of those departed as alive, unseen, active and present with us; perhaps exercising some silent influence among the living.

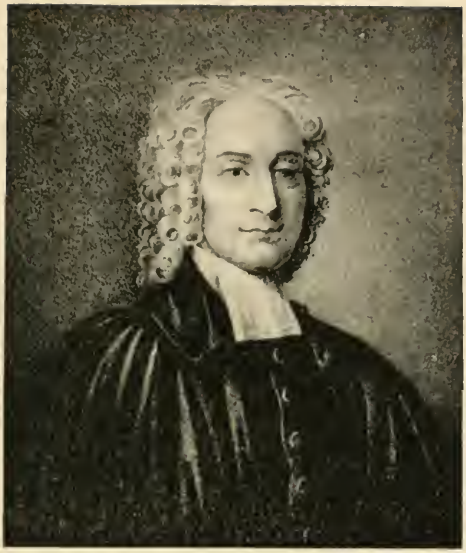
Some good spirit, perhaps in the "stilly night," may have suggested to Newton, Abby, George and the loved mother that the presentation of this instrument would be the most appropriate memorial of the one, who though dead, yet speaketh.

Whether this was a fact, or whether it was the result of ordinary human impulse, the organ was ordered and the contract signed in December, 1883. The organ was built by George Stephens of East Cambridge, Mass., and set up in March, 1884.

If the congregation would estimate the value of the organ, let there be an exercise of the imagination. Think of what the church music would be without it. There would be "a goneness." The organ leads, the organ accompanies, the organ sustains.

Praise ye the Lord. Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.



REV. ELISHA WILLIAMS.

Newington's First Pastor.

Rev. C. H. Williams.

At the centennial celebration of the Congregational church in Longmeadow, Mass., 14 years ago, the historian (who was then pastor), referring to the earliest of his predecessors, Rev. Stephen Williams, said: "He was one of that remarkable family, 90 or more of whom appear upon the roll of Harvard, 80 or more of Yale, and a like proportion in other catalogues; eminent in every profession, adorning every rank, one the founder of Williams college, another a signer of the Declaration of Independence,"—and he might have added that has given to the diocese of Connecticut its honored, and now venerable, bishop and, to the country at large, innumerable Congregational bishops.

On the same occasion, Prof. Park affirmed that the family was not only widely esteemed, but held itself in high regard, also, and demanded this from others. In illustration, he told of one, of the name and blood, resident in Massachusetts and near that town, an officer in the French and Indian

wars, who carried a substantial cane and, when the young men failed to raise their hats to him, used it to remove them summarily and forcibly. I have brought a cane with me today, but do not intend to put it to such use.

I have emphasized, thus, the quality of the stock for a double reason. It is a prolific stock. The family tree has very numerous branches. The annalist of the family estimates (he does not make it as an exact statement) that we have furnished lineally and collaterally seven and a half millions to the race. Think what a country this would be to live in, if the quality of the Williams blood was inferior!

But further, Oliver Wendell Holmes, when asked, "At what time should we begin the education of a boy?" wisely made answer, "One hundred years before he is born." How was it with this boy who, on reaching maturity, became the first pastor of this church and of whom I am to speak?

Stephen and Margaret (Cooke) Williams of Great Yarmouth, England, were granted a son Robert, who married Elizabeth Stalham. (It is not strange that she was willing to exchange that name for his.)

Presently he desired to go over the sea, but she, delicately reared and warmly attached to the home land, demurred until, in a dream, it was made known to her that she might thus become the mother, or ancestor, of many worthy ministers. Then her hesitation vanished and they emigrated from Norwich, England, to Roxbury, Mass., where their subsequent lives were spent and their bodies interred.

On Sept. 1, 1638, the year of their arrival, the third son and fourth child was born to them and named Isaac. He, we are told, represented his town for several years in the General Court and also commanded a troop of horse, thus earning his title of captain. He married Martha Parke, sister to his brother Samuel's wife (who was the mother of John, known in history as the "redeemed captive") and made his home in Newtown, which then included Cambridge.

Of Robert, the emigrant ancestor, Ellis writes: "He was one of the most influential men in town affairs;" and French, that "he was much interested in education and made liberal arrangements to assist the Free Schools, was a subscriber to and for years a trustee of, the funds raised for their benefit."

"He is," says Farmer, "the common ancestor of the divines, civilians and warriors of the name, who have honored the country by their birth."

William, grandson of Robert and son of Isaac and Martha (Parke) Williams, was born Feb. 2, 1665, and

brought up, as was his cousin John, by the maternal grandfather, Dea. William Parke, one of the wealthiest citizens of Roxbury and, for more than 30 years, a member of the General Court. He, with his cousin, was graduated from Harvard college in 1683 and, two years later, began a pastorate at Hatfield, Mass., which ended only with his death 56 years after.

In the discourse at his funeral, Jonathan Edwards said of him: "He was a person of uncommon natural abilities and distinguished learning, a great divine of very comprehensive knowledge and of a solid, accurate judgment." That he was good, as well as great, appears from his parting message to the clerical association of which he had been so long a member: "Love your Master, love your work and love one another."

On the 8th of July, 1686, the Hatfield pastor was married to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Rev. Seaborn Cotton of Hampton, N. H.

Mr. Cotton was born on the Griffin, while his parents, Rev. John and Sarah (Story) Cotton were on their voyage to this country. Two days after landing, he was baptized at St. Michael's church, Boston, and named, in view of the circumstances of his birth, Seaborn. He married Dorothy Bradstreet, whose mother, Aura Dudley, wife of Simon Bradstreet, is known as the "Tenth Muse."

By her he had nine children, all girls but one,—Elizabeth, born Aug. 13, 1665, becoming the wife of William Williams and bearing to him five children. The fourth of these, born at Hatfield, Aug. 20, 1694, was named Elisha and is the hero of my story.

Recurring to Dr. Holmes' oracular utterance, we find, as factors in the pre-natal education of this boy, Robert, Isaac and William Williams, William Parke, John Cotton, Simon Bradstreet and Joseph Dudley, not to mention their wives.

How that education was continued, after he had a local habitation and a name, must be more concisely stated. Dr. Sprague, who had earlier access than I to the family manuscripts and traditions, testifies thus: "His early intellectual developments were more than ordinarily promising; and in the year 1708 he was admitted a member of the Sophomore class in Harvard college. During his collegiate course he was an uncommonly diligent and successful student; and he graduated with honor in the year 1711. After leaving college, his attention was directed to the study of theology under the guidance of his venerable father; and, while he

studied the Bible as the only authoritative standard of Christian doctrine, he availed himself of the writings of the early Reformers and of the Puritans, for which he had ever after a strong relish."

Dr. Sprague fails to note, however, that he taught a grammar school at Hadley the year after his graduation. Two years later, he weds Eunice, daughter of Thomas Chester of Wethersfield, and settles down there to farming, reading law and teaching. This life is interrupted, though, by a voyage to Canso, an island on the southeast coast of Nova Scotia, where he preached to fishermen for a season; and also by service as deputy to the Assembly for five consecutive terms, being clerk at all but one, when he was chosen auditor of accounts. The teaching referred to was chiefly, if not wholly, of Yale students, the college at that time having no certain dwelling place, but distributing itself between Killingworth, Saybrook, Branford, and Milford. In 1716, in view of the discontent among the students at the unsatisfactory conditions, the trustees agreed "that those students who were uneasy might go to other places for instruction until the next Commencement." Forthwith a majority came to Mr. Williams and for two years, until the college was established at New Haven, he seems to have been the chief instructor—not officially recognized as such, however, until some years after, when his name appears upon the catalogue as tutor, 1716-1718. In 1720, according to President Stiles, Mr. Williams was "sanctified by a severe sickness." The same year he was invited, by a committee duly appointed, to "come to Newington and be our minister." As Dr. Sprague suggests, the religious exercises, incident to the critical illness just mentioned, furnished a fit preparation for the active ministry. At all events, the invitation was accepted and the work undertaken. Two years later, Oct. 3, 1722, the church was organized and, on the 17th of the same month, Mr. Williams installed as pastor. In less than three years from that date, Sept. 29, 1725, he was elected rector of Yale college and, a 12-month thereafter, inducted into office. The Assembly expressed their "joy in the good providence that led the reverend trustees to choose a gentleman so agreeable to the country and so very acceptable to the Assembly," and voted to remit the taxes of the town for four years in compensation for their loss.

Of his life and work among the people I can tell very little. Three of his seven children were born during those years, one of whom, Mary, afterward married her cousin, the

Rev. Eliphalet Williams, of East Hartford. Two printed sermons exist to show us his characteristics as a preacher, one "Divine Grace illustrated in the salvation of sinners, "delivered before the Assembly in 1727, but, probably, originally preached here; the other, occasioned by the death of Rev. Thomas Ruggles, of Guilford, the next year. His Wethersfield pastor, in the sermon preached at his funeral, said: "His diction and address were rational, nervous and convincing to the understanding. His preaching was chiefly on the great doctrines."

Of him, as rector of the college, the same authority affirmed: "He presided with wisdom, gravity, and authority; applied himself with care and assiduity to guard and secure the students both from whatever might blemish and wound their moral characters, and from errors and mistakes in matters of religion; and to form their minds, not only to useful knowledge and learning, but to virtue and real piety." "He presided at Commencement," Dr. Stiles testifies, "with great honor. He spoke Latin freely and delivered orations gracefully and with animated dignity."

In 1739, having seen the last of his sons graduate, the last of those born up to that time, he resigned on account of impaired health. The resignation was accepted "with great reluctance and with hearty thankfulness for all his past good service in this capacity." A merited tribute, says Mr. Dexter, for the college "had grown steadily in numbers and reputation."

Returning to Wethersfield, he was sent to the Assembly, where he was chosen Speaker and also Judge of the Superior Court. The latter office he held three years, while he served as deputy through 22 sessions, five of them as Speaker.

At the instance of Sir Wm. Pepperell, he went as chaplain in the expedition to Cape Breton. In 1746 the Assembly appointed him Colonel and Commander-in-Chief of the Connecticut forces for the projected expedition against Canada, and three years later, commissioned him to seek from the Mother Country a return of the monies thus expended. He sailed on this mission in December of '49, empowered also to solicit funds for the college of New Jersey.

He was at this time in business, being of the firm of Williams, Trumbull & Pitkin.

Within five months of his departure, two of his children died, one a daughter of 19, the other an infant, and last, his faithful wife and the mother of his seven children, of whom only two were then living.

Detained in England by various causes, he made the acquaintance and won the regard of many notable people,—Isaac Watts, Lady Huntington, and, especially, Dr. Philip Doddridge, who introduced him, with warm commendation, to that "elect lady," Elizabeth Scott, daughter of Rev. Thomas Scott, an eminent dissenting minister of Norwich, though not the commentator of that name. To her he was married January 29, 1751, and, with her, arrived at New London in April of the next year.

Henceforth his home was in Wethersfield, where he fell asleep July 24, 1755, within a month of his 61st birthday. "A wise, great and good man," is one sentence in the epitaph upon his tombstone.

May we not feel that this church was blest, in having, as its first pastor and teacher, a man so versatile, so accomplished, so affable and so sincere?

Rev. Simon Backus, A. M.

Oswald P. Backus, Sen.

Some one has said that the best part of a man who is continually talking about his ancestors, is under ground, and it has been alleged as undoubtedly true, that the men who fail to recall and recount the good and noble deeds of their progenitors, will leave no record behind them of worthy achievements, no "footprints on the sands of time."

Holy writ abounds with commands to "remember the former things of old," and in Deut. xxxii: 7, 'tis thus expressed. "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will shew thee; thy elders and they will tell thee," and so we gather here to-day to remind, and be reminded of the generations past and gone, and gather inspiration from their lives and work, as we behold the fruitage of them.

Rev. Simon Backus, senior, was born at Norwich, Conn., Feb. 11, 1700, and was son of Joseph Backus and Elizabeth Huntington, his wife. Joseph Backus represented Norwich in the Legislature for forty years, and was a sturdy defender of Congregationalism. Pastor of the Norwich church he was an advocate of the surrender to Presbyterianism, known as the

Saybrook Platform, and upon receiving a copy of the law adopting it, which declared the non-recognition of all churches dissenting from its provisions, he took pains to publicly read and emphasize its penalties, but omitted to refer to a clause in the law, which permitted churches and societies, which might dissent, to exercise worship and discipline according to their consciences, whereupon, the record informs us, up rose Joseph Backus and Richard Bushnell and laid the whole act before the people.

A majority sustained the pastor, and many withdrew from the church. At the next session of the Legislature, Messrs. Backus and Bushnell were censured and expelled from the house, but were promptly re-elected.

Continuing the contest on behalf of ecclesiastical democracy, the year 1713 found a majority of the church voting "soberly to dissent" from the Saybrook platform.

Council after council was called but the opposition would not down. Mr. Backus visited Dr. Increase Mather of Boston, a noted advocate of the Congregational polity, and returned determined not to yield a point.

His persistency was finally rewarded by the triumph of liberal principles, and each generation of his son Simon's descendants, of the name of Backus, have been devoted to the polity of the Pilgrims, and while conceding to all men perfect liberty of thought and practice in matters of religion and politics, they have met King James' motto with the counter declaration, "No church that has a Bishop, no state that has a King."

Rev. Simon Backus graduated at Yale college in 1724, and, having decided to devote his life to the work of the ministry, pursued his theological studies with Rev. Mr. Bulkeley of Colchester, ancestor of ex-Gov. Bulkeley of this state.

Among many of his manuscript sermons in my possession, is one bearing the endorsement "From Heb. xii: 1-2. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. D before Mr. Bulkeley at Colchester, Dec. 1725."

The same month Mr. Backus was waited upon by Mr. James Harris, Mr. John Holmes and Ensign Wells, a committee of a society taken from Colchester and Lyme, called Pungwonk, and requested to preach for the new society.

A memorandum states that the request was granted and an engagement made until "ye May following."

Upon the expiration of this term of service, and on May 25, 1726-7, Mr. Jabez Whittlesey was instructed to call him to Newington, and on June 1 and August 24 following, he was invited to permanently settle with this people, Deacon John Deming, John Stoddard and Samuel Hunn being members of the committee on call and settlement.

In a communication of September 12, Mr. Backus acknowledged the invitation, saying that: "In a due sense of my unworthiness to be employed in, and insufficiency for that great and solemn work of the ministry, I accept of your call to that work, and your proposal for my settlement and yearly maintenance. Desiring your earnest prayers with mine to the God of all grace that I may come to you in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ."

His ordination sermon bears the inscription, "Newington, Jan. ye 25, 1726-7, was presented ye following discourse to ye Reverend Elders antecedent to my ordination from Jo'n 8, 51: Verily, verily, I say unto you if a man keep my sayings he shall never see death."

Upon his advent to Newington, he boarded with one of his Deacons, and was doubtless clothed, as were the clergymen of that time, the clerical wig being a prominent and distinguishing feature of attire.

His regard for the Deacon is proved by an entry in his account book under the date 1726-7, "Borrowed of my landlord, three pounds," and that he regarded the Deacon's office as equal in dignity to his own, is conclusively shown by the further entry, "Paid by a wig one pound fourteen shillings."

Prior to the ordination of Mr. Backus, his eldest brother, Joseph Backus, Jr., who had graduated at Yale College in 1718, and commenced the practice of the law in Hartford, had married Hannah Edwards, sister of Rev. Timothy Edwards, pastor of the church in East Windsor. Two years before the call to Newington, Mr. Backus' cousin, Col. Jabez Huntington, of Windham (whose daughter Anne subsequently married Judge Benjamin Huntington, of Norwich, Conn., first cousin of Mr. Backus), had married Elizabeth Edwards, daughter of Rev. Timothy Edwards.

The young clergyman soon found his way into the family circle of Timothy Edwards, and the record declares that on October 1st, 1729, Eunice Edwards, the daughter next younger in age to her celebrated brother, Rev. Jonathan Edwards, was married to the Newington pastor, the bride's father officiating.

Eunice Edwards was then twenty-four years of age, and

one of ten sisters, all of whom had been carefully and liberally educated in company with the young men who, in considerable numbers, were constantly in training under the tuition of Rev. Mr. Edwards, the daughters in process of time becoming the tutors of the young men.

To complete their education, all of the Edwards girls were sent to the one city of those ancient, as well as these modern times, Boston.

Rev. Timothy Edwards was a graduate of Harvard College, and is said to have been the first student of that institution to whom the degrees of A. B. and A. M. had been awarded at graduation.

He was not only a lover of education, as is evidenced by the unusual training for the time given to his daughters, but was also a man of great personal dignity and possessed marked social qualities, for we find that when he was ordained in 1698, he gave an ordination ball at which King Alcohol was a prominent guest.

Mrs. Backus' grandfather, Rev. Solomon Stoddard, was also a graduate of Harvard College, and for about sixty years was pastor of the church in Northampton, Mass.

Mrs. Backus' great-grandfather was Rev. John Warham, a graduate of Oxford University, a famous preacher, and one of those clergymen of the Church of England who embraced the principles of the Pilgrims, organized a Congregational church beyond the sea, and set sail for America, ultimately settling in Windsor, Conn., where he became the first pastor.

He firmly and successfully resisted the efforts of Presbyterianism to set aside the Pilgrim order, and died at a good old age.

Rev. Elisha Williams, Mr. Backus' predecessor, was an own cousin of Mrs. Backus, their mothers being daughters of Rev. Mr. Stoddard, and the wife of Rev. Mr. Brace was also related to Mrs. Backus, being a granddaughter of another cousin.

When Mr. Backus' pastorate began, five of Mrs. Backus' uncles and two brothers-in-law were clergymen, and including the descendants, own cousins, nephews, grandnephews, and great-grandnephews of Mr. and Mrs. Backus, an incomplete list aggregates eighty persons, ministers of the gospel of Christ, and embraces the names of Williams, Edwards, Dwight, Hopkins, Spring, Austin, Worcester, Davenport, Fisher, Bushnell, Skinner, Hodge, Woodbridge, Hooker, Little, Park, Tyler, Porter, Chapin, Wetmore, Burr and Backus.

The record announces again, that when Eunice and

Simon married, they moved into their "own house," and here in Newington they lived their married life of sixteen years.

Eight children were born to them, six daughters and two sons. But one of the latter attained maturity. The last child, born in March, 1745, was but a babe when the Governor and Council of War appointed Rev. Simon Backus chaplain to the Connecticut troops stationed at the French Gibraltar, known as Louisburg, Island of Cape Breton, which the men of New England had reduced to subjection.

Mrs. Backus, when a child, had seen her father in the capacity of chaplain march away with the New England army in Queen Anne's war.

Now at the age of forty, and the mother of seven living children, she exchanged with her husband their last farewells.

Louisburg had surrendered, the world was astounded, but the cost of siege and garrison had been great in precious lives.

The climate and surroundings were unhealthy and the mortality great.

On December 27, 1745, Mr. Backus preached to the troops from Deut. xxx, 19 : "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing ; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." In his ordination sermon of twenty years before, this text was especially emphasized.

The sermon of December 27 was probably his last, for on February 2, 1746, four weeks later, "after closing the eyes of many a son of Connecticut in death," "it pleased God so to dispose that he in the general mortality was carried to the place of silence," having fallen a victim to the prevailing distemper.

The officers of the army made a handsome contribution, as a testimonial of their esteem for the chaplain, and it and his personal effects were shipped to New England, but the vessel containing them foundered on the voyage, and all was lost.

The Legislature of Connecticut made some provision for the family, and Mrs. Backus continued a resident of Newington for about five years, when she removed to the home of her father, Rev. Mr. Edwards, in East Windsor, where she resided till her death in 1788, at the age of eighty-four years.

The numerous sermons of Mr. Backus, still extant, contain but little reference to the doctrines now considered so objectionable.

On the other hand, they most abound with presentations of the weak and sinful condition of men, and the amiable perfections and disposition of God toward his creatures.

One sermon indeed is quite rhapsodical in its treatment of the Deity as a God of love.

The influence of Mr. Backus and his wife upon their descendants has been most benign. Part of the Sabbath lessons of the children which came from the Edwards family and passed through Newington and down generation by generation to the present time, is the following interrogatory and answer:

What are the four most important things for us to attend to in this world? Answer.—Religion, industry, economy and education.

Some may take exceptions to the answer. Suffice it to say that the impressions formed by it have been abiding through many generations.

Of the children of Mr. and Mrs. Backus, Clorinda married Zebadiah Lathrop, of Norwich, Conn., and one of her sons laid down his life for his country in the War for Independence.

Elizabeth married Lieut. David Bissell, Jr., a soldier of the Revolution. Her grandson, Commodore Simon Backus Bissell, of the Navy, died abroad a few years ago at an advanced age.

Esther married Benjamin Ely, of Holyoke, Mass.

Jerusha married Smith Bailey, of East Windsor, Conn.

Rev. Simon Backus, Jr., was reared in the Edwards home at East Windsor, graduated at Yale in 1759, and was pastor of the Congregational church in Granby, Mass., from 1762 to 1785, and later was pastor of the church in Guilford, Conn. He died in Bridgeport in 1823, aged eighty-five years.

His son Joseph Backus, a graduate of Dartmouth College, class of 1788, practiced law in Glastonbury and Bridgeport, was secretary of the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom in 1796; was one of the early law book writers of the century and an ardent Federalist.

He was author of the Bridgeport petition to Gov. John Cotton Smith during the war of 1812 which called for a convention of the New England States, and was followed by the Hartford convention; of the proceedings of which body he wrote a defence in 1818.

The works of the Newington pastor, chaplain, father, and his wife "live after them," and shall continue to so long as their posterity fails not, and religion, industry, economy and

education shall be maintained as the standard of their lives.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to me, and doubtless would be to my ancestor, that notwithstanding the lapse of almost two centuries, the Congregational fort in Hartford county is still held by a representative of the family, in the person of Rev. Joseph W. Backus, D. D., of Farmington, a nephew in the fourth generation of Rev. Simon Backus of Newington.

Let me conclude in the words of my ancestor which terminated his ordination sermon in 1725 and which will be found in Heb. xiii, 20-21: "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Rev. Joshua Belden.

Joshua Belden.

On the 11th of next November, 150 years ago, the Rev. Joshua Belden, a young man of 23 years, was ordained as pastor of this church. He was born in Wethersfield, July 19, 1724. He entered Yale College at the age of 15 years. In the second year of his collegiate course, he gave his heart to the Saviour, and his thoughts were turned to the work of the Christian ministry.

The circumstances of his conversion were as follows: Having obtained leave of absence from the college for a few days, he rode to Wethersfield in company with two or three of his fellow students. They left the college in high spirits, and their companions saluted them with jovial expressions as they departed. In their absence an astonishing change was wrought upon the college by a special religious awakening which affected in a greater or less degree almost every member of the institution, but of this they heard nothing until their return. Great was their amazement to behold the wonderful change which three or four days had effected in the deportment of their classmates.

From this time, he made religion his supreme concern. Whitefield and Tennant were preaching in New Haven at this time to crowded audiences, but the faculty of the college prohibited the students from going to hear them. The celebrated David Brainerd was a classmate of Mr. Belden, and it is said that he disobeyed the faculty and went to hear the wonderful preachers. Mr. Belden some years later had the pleasure of entertaining Mr. Whitefield at his own house in this place.

One of my earliest recollections as a boy, is of being told by my parents that George Whitefield walked with my great-grandfather down the lane back of our house, and for a long time afterward it was with feelings of awe and reverence that I passed through that lane, for I felt I was treading on holy ground.

While in college, his father, having sold his property in Wethersfield, and having purchased a farm in Canaan, was cut off by death while making arrangements for removal. This led Mr. Belden to give up the idea of his chosen profession, and to turn his attention to the care of his father's family; but afterward at the earnest solicitation of Dr. Hopkins, he commenced his studies for the ministry. After completing his preparatory studies, he preached in a frontier town where alarms of Indians frequently disturbed the people and where all the inhabitants used the precaution of sleeping within a fortification.

In May, 1847, he was invited to preach in Newington, and a few days before his ordination in November, a day of fasting and prayer was appointed for the purpose of asking God's blessing on his ministry. The ecclesiastical society offered "to give Mr. Joshua Belden the use of the parsonage so long as he is our minister and preaches the Calvinistical Doctrine as is generally at this day preached among the Dissenters. Also eight cords of wood yearly while he is a single man and 16 cords yearly after marriage, and 250 pounds, old tenor money, for his salary after the settlement is paid." The settlement was to be made 1000 pounds, to be paid within the term of three years. This seems like a large salary, but we must remember that the currency was greatly depreciated.

The parsonage property referred to consisted of 50 acres of land situated southwest of H. M. Robbins' house. In 1774 Mr. Belden relinquished his rights to this tract, and received instead 17 pounds yearly. He purchased 80 acres of land, it being a portion of the farm that I now occupy, and

his house, a two-story red building with a lean-to, stood on the spot where my father built his house. He was twice married, first to Miss Anne Belden and second to Mrs. Honor Whiting. He had 11 children, nine daughters and two sons. One son and five daughters died before him.

Mr. Belden, as well as some of his parishioners, was a slave owner. During his long pastorate, great changes took place, not only in the parish, but in the colony. In the parish a new meeting house was built in 1797, after a long and bitter controversy. Neither the old nor the new building was heated artificially during his lifetime. Three times the General Assembly allowed the neighboring towns to take a portion of the territory of Newington. The French and Indian war and that of the Revolution occurred during his pastorate. During the war of the Revolution he showed where his sympathies were by preaching such a powerful sermon from the text, "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty," that a large number of his congregation immediately entered the army. Mr. Belden did the actual service of the ministry during 56 years, until November, 1803, and was pastor emeritus for 10 years more.

In May, 1808, his children being all removed from him, he left his own house and entered the family of his son, Joshua Belden, who resided in the house now occupied by Mr. Wetherell, where he lived until his death in 1813.

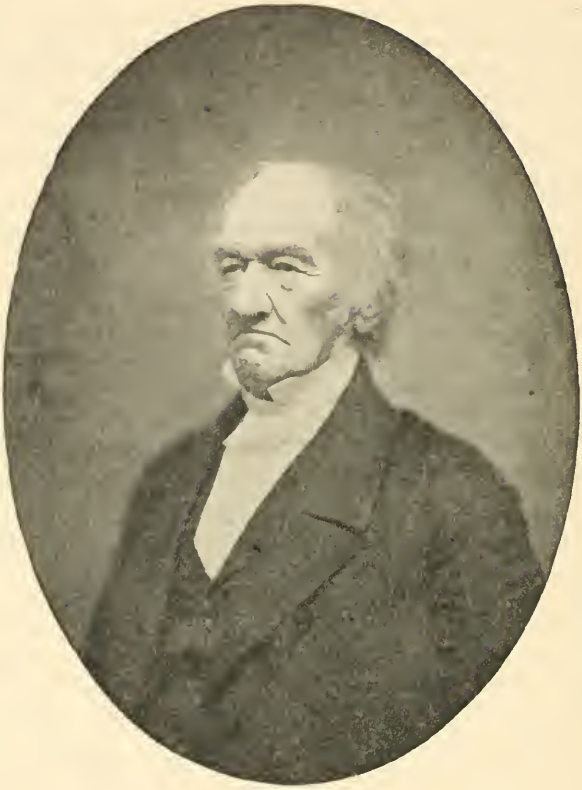
Mr. Belden possessed a sound mind in a sound body. His intellect was clear, his memory retentive, his judgment rational, and his mental exercises were deliberate and firm. In theology he was a diligent and successful student. In the cultivation of these powers of mind, he was employed from his childhood and was favored with the best advantages of education which this country afforded at that time. He was a man of extensive reading, and this continued even to the close of his days. In this employment he spent the most of his time after he left the active ministry and, from long habit, seemed unwearied in his application. He possessed ample means, so that he could furnish himself with whatever books he chose. He was eminently a man of prayer, and great was his love for the word of God.

The Sabbath was peculiarly dear to him. On the day before the Sabbath, he took care that every possible preparation should be made so that the holy work of the day might not be interrupted by secular concerns. He was distinguish-

ed for openness and sincerity. Temperance and frugality were prominent features in him. Of ardent spirits, if he drank at all, it was in a sparing manner; for he treated it as a dangerous thing. His speech seemed to be always with grace. He was ever on the guard against descending to things which might strike any mind as improper in a man of his standing and profession.

As a preacher of Christ, he stood in the first rank. His great concern and his constant prayer was that the Word might be profitable to them that heard it. He felt a strong concern for his country, and for Zion, and this seemed to increase rather than abate as he drew near the close of his life. Many and earnest were the prayers which he poured out for the prosperity of the United States.

One minister, being asked what character he would give Mr. Belden, replied, "I have ever looked upon him as a worthy good man, correct in his theological sentiments, and a pungent, powerful preacher."



REV. DR. JOAB BRACE.

Rev. Dr. Brace.

L. S. Deming.

Rev. Dr. Joab Brace had been pastor of this church 27 years, or a little more than one-half of his ministry, when in 1832 I was received as a member at the age of 13. During the 23 succeeding years I received from him choice spiritual guidance and encouragement. He was indeed, as you may read on his tombstone, "A good minister of Jesus Christ," faithful to his Master and faithful to his people.

My earliest remembrance of him is in connection with a weekly service on Thursday evening at the Bell school house. This was away back in 1824 or 1825. The attendance had become small, and he proposed to discontinue the meeting, but when it closed my sainted mother went to him, and said: "Mr. Brace, as long as myself and one of my family are here, won't you come and meet us?"

It decided him favorably, and ever after, as long as I resided here, he and his successors continued the meeting, greatly to the spiritual uplifting of those attending it. Some of those here present remember how, and what, he preached; and how heartily, too, he sung the songs of Zion. We remember, too, the Village Hymn Book that we carried to the meeting in one hand, while in the other was borne the candle or lamp that lighted up the place for sacred truth's display.

Our pastor knew every man, woman and child within the boundaries of the place; yea, and more, he would know every visitor and stranger, though tarrying only for a day, and I may almost affirm all travelers who passed in the highways. He closely identified himself with every important interest of the community, often sacrificing his own for their benefit. He sought the good of all and especially sought for each one spiritual prosperity. Preaching from the text, "That I may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus," he lifted his glasses and looked with his bright black eye into the face of each one in the audience, and then in thought embraced every one in the community as he told us how earnest he was to lead every one to Jesus Christ, so that no one within the limits of the parish might fail to possess eternal life; and then, turning to the pew at his right hand, he said, "There is my wife, who knows all my weakness and my sin, but I want to so preach the Gospel that she and you and myself may not fail of Christ's salvation."

Thus pointed and personal was his ministry and preaching.

It will be 44 years next January since Dr. Brace resigned his active ministry in this place. We well remember the anniversary sermon at the close of his 50 years of service in which he said, "Were I asked now at the close of my 50 years' stay with you, and were it possible to go back to its commencement with all the knowledge I now possess of you and the work, would I choose the ministry and locate with you in Newington? I should answer, Yes, with all my heart." Thus deep was his love for his work and his people. And yet, he

had outlived all but one of the members of his church who were present at his ordination.

Looking around upon his people at the anniversary, he said, "All these are my children. I baptized them, and they have grown up around me. They don't know that I didn't sprout and grow right here. They have looked upon me as a permanent fixture."

His attachment to the young was one marked characteristic of his ministry. It was the secret of his long stay in our pastorate. Three years previous to the anniversary, he had reached the age of 70, and, in accordance with an early formed determination, he asked for the close of his active ministry as not being willing to burden his people with an old-age minister. It was then that the young people rallied and some 20 of the young men came into the society meeting, and joined, that they might have a voice in the matter, and a vote in its settlement. Seven votes only in the entire congregation were found willing to accept the proposal. What a testimony of faithfulness and acceptable service after 47 years! It put new life into his preaching, and it was never better received.

The three added years were nearly ended, and Dr. Brace, with wife and children and people, had arranged and prepared for the closing anniversary, when suddenly at midnight he waked from sleep to find his wife as suddenly departing by the embrace of death. He was left alone in the house.

And so virulent was her disease, and so death-dealing, that physicians called for a private and speedy burial. Six of us were called in to perform the service, and without a child or relative near him, Dr. Brace bent over the grave, and, with his right hand upon his breast as if to hold the beatings of a throbbing heart, he feelingly said, "There lies my light, my life, my joy for this world;" and his and our eyes were veiled with tears.

This event came Nov. 16, 1854, only two months before the appointed anniversary. His ordination at the commencement of his ministry was on Jan. 16, 1805, and the marriage with his life companion (Lucy Collins) was on Jan. 21, 1805. His children and friends had planned for a jubilee wedding. Great were the expectations and preparations of Dr. Brace and wife and children and people for the combined anniversary occasion. Her sudden death shrouded all with a cloud of sorrow. She had been truly his life and joy —a worthy helpmeet and companion in his home and minis-

try, beloved and respected by all who knew her.

She was remarkable for decision and efficiency of administration, for cool and correct judgment, that seemed to come almost instantly when needed.

One little incident of the wedding day in 1805 shows both his perseverance and her promptness of decision. The day had been exceedingly stormy and snow had banked upon the roads. The sleigh overturned repeatedly that carried Mr. Brace at the age of 23, and another young man, to the home of the bride in West Hartford, and they arrived only at a late hour in the evening. He playfully said, "Lucy, you hardly expected me in such a storm." "Yes, I did, if you were alive." Heart with heart and hand in hand they walked the pathways of life for nearly 50 years.

To supplement his small salary and provide for the education of the children, they for many years kept a family school, receiving young men and preparing them for college. As an educator he was thorough and successful. He assisted greatly in educating the youth of the community, always a regular visitor of the schools and often dropping in when not expected. Often, and perhaps always, he combined religious counsel with his approval of teacher and children. On one such occasion, he was quietly seated for some time and watched the school exercises with close attention. Then, rising to leave, he bent forward and with a full voice said, "Children, always remember, 'Thou God seest me,'" and bowed himself out.

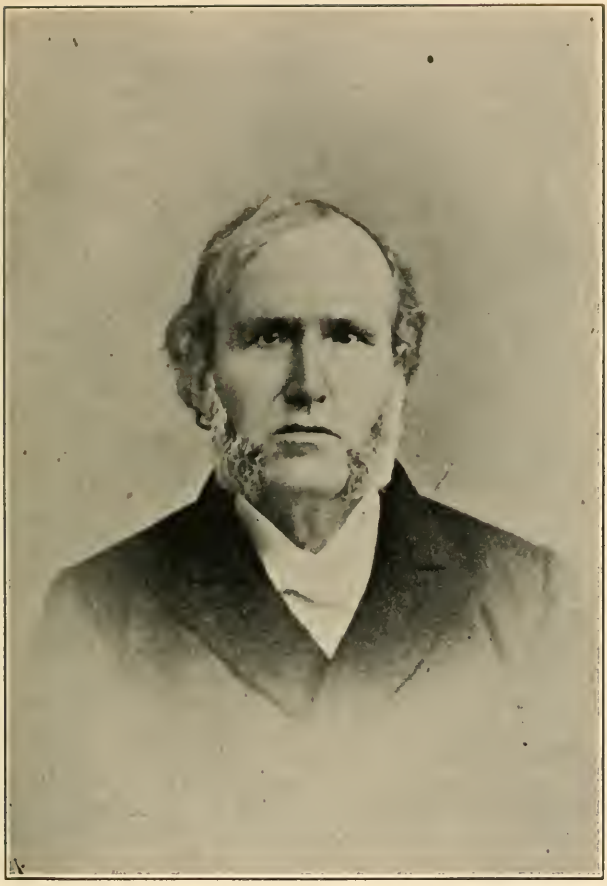
The death of his wife made necessary the breaking up of his home and the last seven years of his life were passed with his daughter in Pittsfield. Death came soon after the fall of Sumter, April 14, 1861. Dr. Brace was eminently a man of peace. He had been grieved greatly by events leading on to the open conflict and prayed earnestly that he might not live to hear the alarm of war. In his sickness of comparatively short duration his friends told him nothing of the open conflict and his prayer was granted. Death came to him, April 20, 1861, at the right hour. It was with difficulty and with delay that his remains were brought to Newington, as cars were loaded with soldiers and equipments hastening to the defence of the national capital. But in the ground he had chosen we laid him at rest.

He was not constitutionally demonstrative or emotional. His research and investigation of subjects ran on practical lines. In sermonizing he usually made personal application and improvement as he went along with his theme, never

attempting to open up mysteries or travel the labyrinths of speculative metaphysics. He, however, made a good use of all the scholarly attainments he had reached, leading always a busy life divided between study and necessary hand toil. He was a good Hebrew scholar, and became so familiar with his Hebrew Bible as to prefer it for his private reading. He could in that language better understand the Old Testament Scriptures.

His sermons were usually written, but sometimes ex tempore, without special preparation. And these often were his best efforts.

His fruitful works have followed him in a community of men and women who have been God-fearing and Christ-loving in all years of Christian service. He filled 50 years of preaching within these consecrated walls, and aided with counsel many a weary pilgrim in his march Zionward. So we can all say, "Amen," as we read the inscription on his monument, "A good minister of Jesus Christ."



REV WILLIAM P. AIKEN.

Rev. W. P. Aiken.

Edwin Stanley Welles.

William Pope Aiken, second son and second child of Capt. Lemuel S. and Sarah Coffin Aiken, was born in the town of Fairhaven, Mass., July 9, 1825. He was a precocious child and it is recalled of him that on his third birthday he read in the New Testament. From the begin-

ning he was an omnivorous reader, and, as a lad, he cared little for boyish sports, preferring a book to a game of ball. He was moreover, sensitive and retiring in nature, and shunned the rougher activities of life. From the day he began to read, the thirst for knowledge was in him. There are few boys that love study, but he really loved it.

The sister nearest his own age relates that almost her first recollection of him goes back to the days when, as a little fellow, he organized a church and preached to a congregation consisting of herself and a younger brother; and how he would stop and beg them not to laugh as he held forth in imitation of the village preacher! This sister recalls the kindliness of his heart, noticeable even in those early days. She writes: "When the boys came of an evening, as was their wont, to play in the orchard, William would leave them all to go and cut wood for a poor woman."

Meanwhile a great purpose was possessing him, and that was to get, if possible, a collegiate education. With this determination, he attended the normal school at Bridgewater, Mass., when he had finished his schooling in Fairhaven. After a course there, he taught school in his native place, and then entered Monson academy, where he thoroughly fitted himself for college. He was now 24 years old, older indeed than most of those who have taken their college degrees, and he felt keenly the disparity between his age and that of his classmates.

But his youth had known the sorrows of ill health, when for a season what was most precious to him, his studies, had to be abandoned. He had also been obliged to interrupt them during his teaching, and thus he stood on the threshold of his college career with these added years of discipline, a part of his best life.

In more than one respect, that waiting season had been good for him, as he entered the justly famous class of '53, of Yale College. No class in the annals of Yale, unless it be that of 1837, has sent forth so many distinguished men.

Bishop Davies of Michigan; the late Senator Gibson of Louisiana; Wayne McVeagh, once Attorney General of the United States and lately our Ambassador to Italy; George Shiras, one of the Justices of the United States Supreme Court; Edmund Clarence Stedman, the poet, and Andrew D. White, formerly president of Cornell and now our Ambassador to Germany, not to mention others of only less renown, were members of the class of '53. But Mr. Aiken was one of the marked men of that remarkable class.

His conversational powers, his fine literary tastes, his profound scholarship and his lofty ideals combined to make him a man of unusual attractiveness. But he was shy in making acquaintances and his circle of friends was small. Only a few knew intimately the modest, brilliant student who kept his room so closely.

As a young man he was distinguished in appearance. Already he had somewhat of the scholar's stoop and with those flashing black eyes that pierced into the depths of things, eyes that could soften with tenderness or blaze with indignation, with a noble crown of forehead, and a mobile, sympathetic mouth, quick and energetic in his movements whether physical or mental, his was a noticeable figure anywhere.

In his college course he won a prize for high scholarship and was elected a member of Skull and Bones Society, always a much coveted distinction among Yale men. At graduation he ranked among the foremost in his class. He then served for a while as tutor in the family of Mayor Skinner of New Haven, who received a few pupils into his fine home. From 1855 until 1857, he was tutor of Latin in his own alma mater. He is said to have been the most popular tutor then at Yale.

He had a keen insight into human nature, which was tempered with a large sympathetic humor. It was not an awful ordeal to recite to him. The humanness of his nature drew the students; and then, what flashes of wit, what brilliant comments illumined those recitations!

One who sat under his instruction writes: "His superior scholarship, his unvarying kindliness and his rare tact in teaching, secured for him the respect and affection of every member of the class. His somewhat nervous temperament, his admiration of 'sure-footed' scholarship (to use his words) and the pain which unsuccessful recitations gave him never affected his patience in the presence of the honest but ungifted student."

Meanwhile, during these years of tutorship, he was studying theology and fitting himself to be a minister of Jesus Christ. One Sunday early in the year 1856, he stood in this pulpit, then vacant by the resignation of Dr. Brace, and preached to a people who heard him gladly.

A few Sundays later, again he occupied the pulpit and the result was a vote of the church, March 3, 1856, "That we make choice of and invite Mr. William P. Aiken to become colleague pastor with Rev. Dr. Brace."

This, his first call, was joyfully accepted by Mr. Aiken, who was ordained to the ministry in this building Tuesday, Jan. 15, 1857, President Woolsey of Yale preaching the sermon. For ten years he served the people here. The mutterings of the great civil war were already being faintly heard as he began his ministry, and then the storm of war burst upon the nation!

Those thrilling years tried all men's souls. Some in this room remember his fervent words as he addressed the men who went forth to battle. And one old veteran still treasures up one of his stirring exhortations, "Don't get shot in the heel!"

Later, when the need of consolation came, and it came so often in the nation's agony, how he could comfort the suffering and the sorrowing! The eloquence of sincerity was in all he said.

What the character of his ministry was, not a few here to-day can testify. He was a bold, uncompromising preacher of righteousness. No one was in doubt as to what his opinions were. He abhorred dissimulation in all its forms.

He cared for the great essentials of Christianity and scorned to waste his time on religious trifles.

He preached the love of Christ: man's need of God and his capacity for receiving Him, the greatness of the life here, as well as the glory of the life hereafter. And he wanted all to enjoy the boundless treasures of eternal life.

With his poetic soul, he was ever conscious of

> The light that never was, on sea or land;
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream.

His sermons were always scholarly, but never dry. They could not be with his imagination irradiating them.

They might be termed brilliant sermons; sometimes startling, but they were the powerful efforts of a complex nature to penetrate and make known some of the mysteries of God. But I think he enjoyed mingling with his people in their homes better than preaching eloquent sermons. His love went out to every living creature, and wherever there was suffering, there he was to comfort. In his ministrations the poor and neglected were first on his mind. It was his delight to obey the apostle's injunction, to "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

In after days, when looking back upon his life, he used to say that the years he spent in Newington were the happiest years he had known. It was a mutual sorrow on the part of both pastor and people when he resigned his minis-

try in 1867. Early in his pastorate he had married Miss Susan C. Edgerton, daughter of the Hon. Edwin Edgerton of Rutland, Vermont, and his children, two sons and two daughters, were all born in Newington. The oldest of these, Rev. Edwin E. Aiken, consecrated his life to the cause of missions in China, a dozen years ago.

The rest of his life may be briefly indicated. Upon leaving here, he became principal of Abbott academy at Groton, Mass., but ill health compelled him to withdraw in two years. Later, he was for three years acting pastor of the Congregational church in Vergennes, Vermont. But his health had long been forsaking him, and his last years were spent in an invalid's retirement at Rutland, Vermont.

The sufferings of those years were great, but he endured them as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and out of them all he passed to the larger life with God, March 31, 1884.

Rev. Robert G. Vermilye, D. D.

1870—1873.

Roger Welles.

The Rev. Robert George Vermilye was born March 3, 1813, in New York City, the son of William W. and Mary (Montgomery) Vermilye. He died at Hartford, July 5, 1875. He supplied the pulpit of the Congregational church in Newington, from the second Sabbath in June, 1870, until Nov. 2, 1873, when he ceased his services on account of failing health.

Dr. Vermilye graduated at Columbia College, New York, in 1831. In December, 1837, he was appointed a professor of Greek and Latin in that college. He was licensed as a minister by the Presbytery of New York, April 19, 1838, and was ordained pastor of the Presbyterian church in German Valley, New Jersey, in July, 1843. He was afterwards called to the pastorate of the Congregational church in Clinton, Oneida County, N. Y., where he was installed June 10, 1846. He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from his Alma

Mater in 1851, when 38 years old. In 1857 he was elected to the Professorship of Systematic Theology in the Connecticut Theological Institute, then located at East Windsor, which position he held till his death. His call to the temporary pastorate of the church in Newington was by a unanimous vote of the society, and in renewing the invitation each year the vote was unanimous in every instance. This action of the society indicated the sentiments of the people. His high qualities as a christian gentleman and a faithful minister of Christ were acknowledged by all.

In social intercourse he was kindly and genial, and won the hearts of his congregation. They venerated his piety and purity of heart, and at the same time felt an honest pride in his large knowledge and ability. It was the custom to hold a Sunday-school concert on the second Sabbath afternoon of each month, and Dr. Vermilye added greatly to the enjoyment and profit of the service by inaugurating a question box, and answering off-hand the questions propounded, giving variety and novelty, solving doubts, clearing knotty points, and giving us occasional opportunity to learn no little theology. If we sometimes took delight in asking hard questions our delight was increased by the skillful manner in which he answered them.

When he first came to us his health seemed firm, and his step was quick and elastic. He continued with us till failing voice and health compelled him to desist. He chose to close his ministry with us on communion Sabbath, and as he dispensed for the last time the symbols of our Saviour's dying love, and spoke his own parting words, the tearful eyes of the congregation testified their love, sympathy and sorrow. We sorrowed most of all for the words that we should see his face no more. It was the last time he preached. His funeral was attended at the Center church, Hartford, on Wednesday afternoon, July 7, 1875, whence his mortal remains were carried to the vault at Cedar Hill cemetery. A few minutes before his death he committed himself to his Lord, whom he had served so long, in these words: "And now, O my Saviour, keep me in life or death; I commit myself to Thee."

Rev. Sanford S. Martyn.

Charles K. Atwood.

When a small boy my father took me with him to witness a "general training" at Windsor. During the day he met many acquaintances with whom he had conversation. Of it all I remember but one brief sentence—a remark of Gen. Hillyer—that "The longer I live the more I think of blood." It gave a new idea to the boy and its impression was deep and lasting, so that in later years as he hears of the success or failure of a man he is apt to ask: Who was his father? And what of his family? Naturally, therefore, when asked to prepare a brief memorial of Rev. Sanford S. Martyn, a former pastor, to be read on this our anniversary day, the writer was led to look into his genealogy, and knowing the man, his ability, his zeal for his calling, and his marked success, was not surprised to find that not only his father, but his grandfather and his great-grandfather had been, each in his day, a minister of the gospel; and his son, born here during his brief pastorate, has entered on the same work. Five in direct descent! May the line continue till the time comes when there will be no need of ministers to say: "Know thou the Lord!" While attributing so much importance to heredity I would by no means underrate environment. Doubtless while he resided with us its influence was helpful and beneficial! He was welcomed to the pastorate by a people capable of appreciating his ability and ready to encourage and assist him in his labor by word and deed, thus stimulating him to continued effort for higher attainment. Even unconscious childhood yielded a helpful influence. In one of his letters he writes: "I always thought the boys and girls in the Sunday-school were the brightest and the prettiest, too, I ever knew," and nearly thirty years afterwards he adds, "I think so still."

After Mr. Aiken left us in the summer of 1867, we were for some months without a pastor or stated supply. We were looking for some one to fill the vacancy his withdrawal had left. Early in the autumn of that year, a temporary resident, not a member of this, nor I think of any other church, expressed to Rev. Mr. Ross, pastor of the Baptist Church in West Hartford, a wish that he would come to Newington and hold week day meetings. He consented, and

the disused Methodist church was placed at his disposal. The attendance, at first small, gradually increased with growing interest, until more room was needed, and early in the winter this house was opened, our church heartily uniting with and aiding Mr. Ross in his work.

In November Mr. Martyn, a graduate of Yale University, where he took an honorable stand as a scholar and received many prizes for superiority in writing, speaking and debating, at this time a member of the senior class in Yale Theological Seminary, came to preach for one Sabbath. He was favorably received and engaged for further service. In short he supplied for six months, during which he preached morning and afternoon, as was then our custom, and led in the evening service, all the while maintaining his position in his class and engaging in outside labor in New Haven to obtain the means of self support. Surely those were months of labor!

From the first Mr. Martyn engaged earnestly in the work of calling men to repentance, and his Sabbath discourses were in line with those of Mr. Ross during the week. In that winter more than fifty hopeful conversions were reported. In February a meeting of the church was held to choose a pastor. There was no doubt on whom the choice would fall.

A paper signed by twenty-seven non-church-members, expressing their intention to ask admission soon, and their preference for Mr. Martyn as pastor, was presented and read and by vote of the church ordered to be preserved on its records.

Mr. Martyn accepted the call of church and society and was ordained in April. For two years the relation of pastor and people continued. Then came the resignation. He had been called to New Hartford.

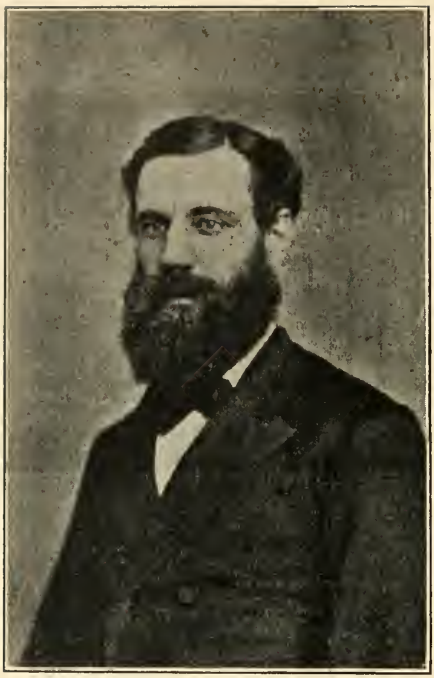
With regret the advice of the council was accepted, and his relation to us since has been but a pleasant memory. Like Paul he seems to have been appointed to the care of many churches, being now in his seventh pastorate, flattering calls to others with a much larger salary having been declined, and like him he has been permitted to rejoice and to gather in many of the fruits of his labor, the churches to which he has ministered having been strengthened by the addition of more than five hundred new members, his "joy and crown." Serious dissensions existing before, and at the time of, his settlement have in two notable instances been healed. From some of them the writer has received testi-

monials of their warm affection for their former pastor, and their sincere regret for his departure.

These results indicate the man and the preacher, so that I need not dilate on his sermons. Suffice it to say that while scholarly, eloquent and abreast of the times, they were spiritual, devout, sincere, teaching the truths he believed and had experienced.

Socially he was no less a favorite than in the pulpit. In manner and conversation frank, genial, winning, accompanied by his estimable and popular wife, a most worthy helpmeet for a minister, he was sure of a welcome wherever he chose to call and found the latchstrings of his people's homes always out.

He is now in the prime of life with the prospect of many useful years before him. Long may he continue to deserve the epitaph on the stone which covers the hallowed dust of Dr. Brace and late may it be written.



REV. WILLIAM J. THOMSON.

Rev. W. J. Thomson.

John S. Kirkham.

William Jamieson Thomson, born July 21, 1840, in the city of New York, received his early education in the schools of that city, graduated from Columbia college and afterward from Princeton seminary where he was offered a professorship, but,having early consecrated his life to "the ministry of the Word," he declined and after a few months' travel abroad, he accepted a call to the parish of Croton Falls, N. Y.

He married Sadelia Sherwood, daughter of a prominent lawyer of New York city, soon after returning from Europe. Mr. Thomson's pastorate at Croton Falls of four years was cut short by ill health, both Mr. and Mrs. Thomson having contracted malaria in the parsonage, situated directly on the bank of Croton river. Much against the wishes of the

church and parish, he removed to Seymour, Conn., where he preached two years as stated supply.

From Seymour he came to Newington, accepting a practically unanimous call from both church and parish. He was installed May 27, 1875, Rev. Aaron Adams of Wethersfield being moderator of the council, and Heman R. Timlow of Southington scribe. Mr. Adams is the only one of that council with us to-day and with grateful hearts we greet him.

Mr. Thomson continued to minister to this people four years and three months, at the end of which we reluctantly accepted his resignation. He ministered temporarily to the people of South Glastonbury two years, though not expecting to stay a definite time when he went. From there he went to the church at East Canaan, Conn., where after two years of labor, broken at times by ill health and extreme suffering, he finished his life work and died as bravely as he had lived, aged 44 years, a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

When Mr. Thomson came to us, he was just entering manhood's prime, a fine picture of physical strength and manliness. Perhaps it was that that first attracted the attention of the young, for when engaged in any athletic game, they were sure of at least one sympathetic spectator. Although not obtrusive, he had a happy faculty of winning and then influencing the young to the beautiful service of self sacrifice, in following the Master. Mr. Thomson was preeminently a man of faith and rested with more cheerful certainty on God's promises of good to him and his than children do on an earthly parent. "He believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." His life was an illustration of "simply trusting every day" for every day's needs.

In my recollections of Mr. Thomson, this stanza has come to me o'er and o'er:

> How pure of heart and sound in head,
> With what divine affections bold
> Should be the man whose thought would hold
> An hour's communion with the dead.

And with Nature's own poet I can say of him:

> His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mixed in him that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, "This was a man!"

His last hours were marked by the same sublime faith and trust that ruled his life. "He walked with God and was not, for God took him."

Rev. J. E. Elliott.

Miss Agnes W. Belden.

Rev. John E. Elliott, a descendant of Elder Brewster, was born in New London, Oct. 22, 1829. He was consecrated to the Lord and to the work of the ministry in his infancy, by his mother, who was a woman of intense piety. In his boyhood and early manhood he manifested an earnest Christian character. He was graduated from Amherst college in 1857, and from Hartford Theological Seminary (then at East Windsor) in 1860.

After leaving the seminary, he married Miss Mary A. Thomson of East Windsor, who through all his ministry proved a valuable helpmeet. Prevented by the condition of his health from going as a missionary to the foreign field, he greatly desired to be a home missionary in the far West, but was detained in Connecticut a few years.

He was ordained in the Congregational church in Ridgebury, where he became pastor. Afterward he was settled in Higganum. The way being then opened to carry out his long cherished purpose, he went under the auspices of the Home Missionary Society to Iowa, and thence to Nebraska. In 1874, on account of the death of a brother and sister, he felt called, for the sake of his aged widowed mother, to make his home in the East. After serving the church in South Glastonbury a few years, he was called to this church, where he remained from 1879 until 1884. His whole ministry was characterized by intense earnestness and perseverance in whatever he undertook, and he was continually studying and planning for those things which would add to the usefulness and spirituality of his people. He was very desirous of the financial good of the church. While he was in Newington, the large debt of the ecclesiastical society was canceled, and great were his efforts to interest his people in the proposition to build a chapel.

By his efforts a Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was formed in this church. He had great love and respect for his mother and often used to refer with expressions of gratitude to the fact that she was praying for him and his church. Perhaps it was partly owing to this love that the aged members of his flock were treated with such courtesy. He was firm and fearless in whatever he considered right.

He was a man of strict economy, and was able to make his small salary cover his running expenses, although he was at this time educating his only child at Amherst, and was scrupulously giving his tenth to the Lord.

After leaving Newington he was about three years in Bridgewater, when a call from the State of Washington led him to gladly turn his steps to the Pacific coast, where he anticipated giving the remaining years of his ministry to vigorous home missionary work. He began his labors there Nov. 1, but waning strength soon led to the discovery of a fatal disease which lurked stealthily in his system, and caused his death on Jan. 19, 1888, less than 12 weeks from the time of his arrival in the new field. His body was brought East and laid in the cemetery in New London.

Rev. J. O. Barrows.

Alfred B. Fish.

Rev. John Otis Barrows was born in Mansfield, Conn., in 1833, youngest of a large family of children. In 1860 he was graduated from Amherst college and took his theological course at Hartford and Andover seminaries. He was called to North Hampton, N. H., in 1863. Here he served in the ministry a number of years, after which he was settled in the neighboring town of Exeter. While in this pleasant parish, he felt that God called him to the foreign work, and in 1870 he was sent by the A. B. C. F. M. as a missionary to Turkey. There he served ten years and a-half when he was obliged to return to this country on account of the health of his family. After this, he preached for a time in Atchinson, N. H.

In 1885 he received a call to become pastor of this church.

Of Mr. Barrows' faithfulness as a pastor many would gladly speak. In time of sickness and bereavement, the tender self-sacrificing ministries of himself and his dear wife linked grateful hearts to theirs in bonds that will never be broken.

His systematic efforts to get non-church-goers to attend Sabbath services met with a measure of success. After persevering attempts on his part, one who had long absented

herself remarked, "I shall *have* to go to church now. Mr. Barrows will never let me alone until I do."

It was most interesting to hear from him of the customs and habits of people with whom a residence in foreign lands had made him familiar; but beyond instructing and entertaining with these things, he succeeded in imparting some of his own zeal and enthusiasm in the cause of missions as a record of our missionary organizations will show.

In rebuking wrong-doing among the members of his flock, he was ever frank and fearless, and yet speaking the truth in love as to win the heart of the wrong doer. One of his parishioners declared after one of these occasions that he "never got such a dressing-down in his life before," but added, almost in the same breath, "There is nobody I respect more than I do Mr. Barrows," a sentiment which he still often repeats.

In current events in the political and social world, he took a deep interest and was guided to see and point out the national perils that lurked in an easy-going citizenship, great trusts, and vast monopolies. He had universal success in awaking a sense of responsibility in those who had preferred to stay in the background and let others conduct the prayer meeting. After a persuasive interview on this subject with a church official, the latter finally promised to lead the next meeting, but when the time came he confessed that he felt tempted to "play the part of Jonah and run away." But he did not run away and since then has led many prayer meetings.

To the liquor traffic and the saloon he was an open foe and temperance sentiment during his stay grew apace. The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was organized with his approval and help and ever found in him a steadfast friend and strong ally.

The old church had borne for years a good reputation for benevolent offerings, but under his wise methods there was a large increase. Year by year the blessed spirit of giving grew until the church had gained an enviable prominence in this regard.

Of the souls saved, of the lives reconsecrated, and the spiritual natures that were deepened and nourished under his ministry, who can adequately speak ?

One who had for years in a distant city sat under the preaching of eminent men testified that she had never before been so helped and blessed in her spiritual life. He seemed always to be hearing the words of the Master to Peter: "Feed my sheep."

Rev. S. S. Martyn's Paper

At Newington's Celebration.

When I asked your pastor upon what special feature of this occasion he would like to have me speak, he suggested reminiscences of my ministry here. How they throng upon me as I stand before you! And yet this church and people are a very present and living reality to me,—not a dream, not a distant past, but still part of myself and a potent fact in my active labor to-day. For here I was born into the ministry, here the ordaining hands were placed upon my head, as I began, all young and inexperienced, my labors as your pastor: and I feel to-night as if coming back to the shrine of my hopes, the Mecca of my life. And thus the occasion to me is more even than an uplifting memory,—it is the voicing afresh of all God has permitted and still permits me to be and do in His cause. Here sacred friendships began which can only become more enduring as time passes on into the sweet by-and-by. Still do I share the charm of that enthusiastic devotion you accorded me, and I feel yet resting upon me the indescribable influence of a church life rich in all the Gospel inheritance of a worthy and exalted past.

This old church did well its part in the formative days of our country, and he who shares in any degree such a special church inheritance must truly be blest. The two things which it seems to me are most significant in the nearly two centuries gone, since the organization of this church, are the *character* here developed and the *vitality* of faith here manifested. These make the Newington past loom up in grander proportions the more it is studied, as they must ever constitute the substratum of all other controlling facts in human destiny.

I hold in my hands a very precious bundle of documents. They are the letters, papers and sermons covering my invitation, call, ordination and the beginning of my pastorate here. I cannot read them; it would take too long. But what hallowed scenes nearly or quite a generation ago do they bring before me, for they relate to some of your own most sacred history, when God poured out His Spirit in reviving power here, and gave you fresh enthusiasm for His work, an enthusiasm still marking your life and work to-day. I was in no sense a creator or leader in that revival. But a student in Yale Theological Seminary and supplying the pulpit, I

preached to it as best I could when, after my first appearance, it had grown up through the labors of the evangelist, Mr. Ross. These letters cover all that time.

I was but little more than well started in my senior year in the Seminary when, Nov. 20, 1867, a letter from H. M. Robbins, then head society's committee, invited me to supply you for a couple of Sundays, upon the recommendation, unknown to me, of Rev. Wm. R. Eastman of Plantsville. I came and continued all winter with you and during the revival, until your call came to become pastor, with the added wish, expressed on your part, that I might be ordained before my Seminary graduation, so as to receive the new members into the church. The Seminary granted the request on condition that I remain and graduate in due order, which condition was complied with.

Here are the letters conveying that call, written and signed by C. K. Atwood, acting for the church and also its clerk, and by Roger Welles, though not then a church member, for the society. They refer also to the visit to my room in the Seminary by Mr. Atwood, and to that made to my home by himself and Jedediah Deming, then not deacon, but one of the special committee of the society to extend to me the call.

Among the other papers is a petition signed by 26 young men not in the church, though many of them expecting soon to join and headed by Roger Welles, respectfully and earnestly asking the church to call me. When I saw that paper I confess it had great weight with me, for what young man would not be moved by such an appeal from young men like himself ?

I remember well my first sermon here, on "The Miraculous Conversion of St. Paul." I had just carefully studied and written it out while reading Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul," though without any thought or knowledge of Newington. It was a kind of pet child to me, for, perhaps like other students in such things, I fancied it eloquent. And so, of course, I came and delivered it. But whatever its real merit, I have ever felt that it struck the key note of my ministry here, a ministry of quickening and conversion and all else built up upon that foundation, and that God's hand was especially in it.

What an ordination that was, April 29, 1868 ! You remember that Yale and Hartford seminaries in those days were not altogether at one, any more than were the cities of New Haven and Hartford as joint capitals of the State;

and, as I thought I was coming among the Philistines, I determined to take with me my stalwart leader and spiritual father in the seminary, Dr. Bacon, who was moderator of the council. I also prepared a carefully-written statement, which was a new departure then. On that council were Dr. John Todd of Pittsfield, Mass., son-in-law of Dr. Brace and who preached the sermon; Dr., then only Rev., C. L. Goodell, of New Britain, who gave a most felicitous charge to the people in the course of which he admonished them to let me "go a-fishing," like Peter of old, if I wanted to, a thing I had never done in my life and had no thought of doing. On the council were also Rev. E. C. Jones of Southington, who made the ordaining prayer, and Rev. J. H. Twichell of Hartford, who gave the right hand,—my still revered friends; Revs. S. J. Andrews and N. C. Adams; also Revs. L. H. Hallock, the scribe, Wm. R. Eastman, and others of the churches and region around—the whole making up a council that ought to have been competent to put any man into office! Nor can I soon forget the charge to the pastor by Dr. Bacon, or that ordination dinner at Mr. Belden's, when Mrs. Todd whispered in my ear, "Don't let them sell the parsonage!"

Here is a quotation from Dr. Todd's letter accepting the invitation to preach the sermon:

> Some days before you wrote, I was thinking over the question, "Shall I ever visit Newington again,—that place associated with so many early and dear memories?" And I said to myself, "Probably not, probably not." But my heart was so drawn that way that your request finds me more than half committed—so (D. V.), I will endeavor to meet your wishes, and become acquainted with you at that time.
>
> I congratulate you on going to that most lovely valley in Connecticut, among a very uncommon people, and a spot which the Spirit of God has so often visited that it seems like the garden of the Lord. Go full of courage and hope, and feel that it's very little consequence where we are, as to usefulness and meeting the responsibilities of life.

Dr. Todd's humor came out, also, in the council, when, with stern and unmoved face, but with a twinkle in his eye, he asked me, "Did you ever know a perfect man?" "Not in Connecticut," I replied; "perhaps he may live up in Massachusetts." The doctor seemed satisfied.

What sacred scenes I recall a little later! The first Sunday of my pastorate, 24 precious converts were received into the church, ranging themselves before the old pulpit, in the unaltered audience room, or at least unaltered as it is now, with only two aisles and body and wall pews. Many of that number are still among you, active in the church life, and their faces I love still to greet. In my pile of papers is

my first sermon that Sunday, as pastor, from the text, 1 John, iii, 14: "Hereby know we that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," and I remember how I prized the warm commendation of the sermon, after it was over, by Dea. L. S. Deming. Then came the funeral of good old Dea. Jedediah Deming, three days after that Sunday, when we gathered in this house, and I preached my first funeral sermon, Mr. Aiken also assisting in the services. What a help that patriarch deacon had been in preparing the converts for reception into the church, catching his death by exposure in the work! And, later, the stately Gen. Martin Kellogg fell at the ripe old age of 87 years, public citizen in the State, and respected by all. He also was brought into this house to be buried, Mr. Aiken preaching the discourse and myself assisting, and speaking a few words as I leaned over and looked into that serene face before me. Often did I talk with him on religious things. He was a true Christian, mistrusting himself before God, yet, as he told me, having family prayers, though in his mistrust not feeling worthy to join the church.

Then came the third of September communion, following that first one in May, and 18 more were received into the church, with the name of Katie Deming heading the list, which is among papers preserved. It was her father, then Dea. L. S. Deming, who, by letters, also in my pile, kept me informed all winter of the progress of the revival, so that I was enabled to shape my sermons accordingly. That, too, was the Sunday when I undertook my first baptism by immersion, done in the brook by Mr. Kirkham's, just after Sunday School. It had rained all night, the stream was swollen, and we found it difficult to secure a good standing place. Whether it was that I was new to the business or was not a born Baptist I cannot say, but somehow it was very muddy there, and I found myself sinking deeper into the mud all the while, until I could hardly move or stand either, and came very near going under myself. I would in no wise belittle that sacred service; yet it was an induction into that part of my duties I can never forget.

Then what a glorious Christmas tree we had, when the church was trimmed,—the first thing of the kind in the old church,—and some dear friends were afraid we were turning Catholics. And those nine young girls, hardly girls either, yet hardly young ladies,—standing up and singing in front of the pulpit, "We three kings of Orient are,"—with John Stoddard playing the bass viol or violoncello, and his brother Hudson

also helping! I can see them now—Alice, Augusta, Nellie, and all the rest, whom I thought then the best girls a minister ever had for parishioners. Nor am I inclined to doubt it now.

So it went. There was the festival in the tent for raising some church funds, when it rained all the while,—it seemed to be a kind of wet season while I was there, when the minister lost his clothes basket he had brought some things in, and looked all round for it, only to find at last that Charles Atwood had appropriated it. It might be interesting if Mr. Atwood—it was before he was deacon, I am glad to say—would read the poem he wrote upon the incident, headed, "The Minister's Clothes Basket."

But we turn from these lighter scenes. Then were put in office the three deacons who still uphold their pastor's hands efficiently, faithfully, as his officers, Deacons Charles K. Atwood, Jedediah Deming, and Heman A. Whittlesey. It was not so easy securing them either, feeling as they did their unworthiness for the office. They wouldn't accept the office at first and declined to serve, until when, seeing the church without deacons, and beholding their pastor's impatience, they at length came to his relief, and began that honorable service which still makes them the trusted leaders in the same office. And I want to say now, that those same brethren never failed their young pastor, whenever, in his untried ardor, he went to them for counsel and help. They stayed up his hands, as Aaron and Hur the hands of Moses, and he owes them still an unpaid debt of gratitude.

There were others whose names come before me, sisters as well as brothers, whose love was dear to me, and not all of whom are still here. I recall the Willards, the Robbinses, young David, the quiet hero, as it always seemed to me, as well as his mother and uncles, the Kelloggs, the Beldens, Mrs. Chauncey Deming, Mrs. Dea. Jedediah Deming, sr., Aunt Hepsie Stoddard, good old Mr. and Mrs. Latimer, the Rockwells, Wm. Kirkham and wife, Joseph Francis, the Browns, and so on to the end. Their bodies may be gone, yet their presence is with us,—present in the forms of those who bear still their names, whom, known as their children, I still esteem as friends,—present in the same life and spirit of the church, which makes us all one with the past, yet sharers in the present and models for the future.

Soon came to me the call away. But the church of my first love still remained to win for itself a yet more successful record. For as I look at this old house in its tasteful

modern setting, and see this host of young people, strangers almost to me, save as I see their fathers' or mothers' eyes beaming through their own, and remember your effective labors, your more than $1,000 benevolence list in this year book, and see your activities in Christian Endeavor and Sunday school work. I feel that it is no decrepit and worn-out past that is yours, but that you were never so well equipped for service as to-day.

I stood once in the quiet cemetery just back of us, and read the inscription upon Dr. Brace's monument, so beautifully referred to by Dea. L. S. Deming, "A good minister of Jesus Christ," and I said, "Let that be my motto, and let me live and die like him, a worthy exemplar of my Master and a help to my kind." This inspiration I drank in from the beginning here in my ministry. Here affection still turns. Here I brought my young wife whom you took so warmly to your hearts. A certain romance, the romance of youth, gilds for me the memory of this old place. As to-day I saw the forms moving slower and the lines deepening in the faces of those who were in their prime when I first came, a certain sadness came over me, and I felt that indeed the ties of earth must soon break. Yet while these guides and companions of our lives still linger with us, we may cherish them and write their virtues in our own lives. This feeling comes afresh to me at this hour,—still to repeat in our living that of those who once wrought and toiled, and here fell asleep in Jesus. Wherever my steps may turn, still will the memory of this my first pastorate remain fresh and green. And when my closing hour here below shall come, and the light of earth grow dim upon my sight, I would yet in my fading thoughts breathe a prayer for the church and parish of my early love and choice,—dear old Newington.

Old Officers

Deacons of the Congregational Church, Newington.

Church Organized October 3, 1722.

Birth	Names	Elected	Term Ended	Remarks
July 25, 1679	John Deming	Oct. 3, 1722	May 1, 1761	Died
Mar. 14, 1675	Jabez Whittlesey	Mar. 1726	1744	Removed to Bethlem
Feb. 10, 1691	Josiah Willard	1744	Mar. 9, 1757	Died
Dec. 11, 1707	Joshua Andrus	Apr. 20, 1757	Apr. 25, 1786	Died
Dec. 25, 1711	John Camp	July 2, 1761	July 27, 1782	Died
Aug. 19, 1736	Elisha Stoddard	Aug. 14, 1782	July 2, 1790	Died
Dec. 31, 1723	Charles Churchill	Aug. 31, 1786	Oct. 29, 1802	Died
Feb. 10, 1748	James Wells	Aug. 5, 1790	Oct. 29, 1818	Resigned
Apr. 7, 1753	Daniel Willard	Feb. 24, 1803	Jan. 16, 1817	Died
Aug. 27, 1772	Levi Deming	Oct. 29, 1818	Jan. 1, 1847	Died
May 6, 1783	Origen Wells	Oct. 29, 1818	Nov. 29, 1847	Resigned
Sept. 7, 1790	Jedediah Deming	July 1, 1847	May 4, 1868	Died
July 27, 1787	Jeremiah Seymour	Nov. 29, 1847	Apr. 1, 1867	Died
Mar. 19, 1822	Rufus Stoddard	May 3, 1867	Jan. 30, 1870	Died
Oct. 23, 1817	Levi S. Deming	May 3, 1867	Apr. 1869	Removed to Middletown
Mar. 15, 1820	Jedediah Deming	Feb. 6, 1870		
Dec. 24, 1820	Charles K. Atwood	Mar. 6, 1870		
Oct. 25, 1823	Heman A. Whittlesey	Mar 6, 1870		
Mar. 7, 1829	Roger Welles	Jan. 9, 1896		

Congregational Sunday School, Newington.

Established June 20, 1819.

Superintendents.

Term	Names	Elected	End of Term
1 Year	Dea. Levi Deming	1820	1821
13 Years	Daniel Willard	1821	1834
5 Years	William Deming	1834	1839
4 Years	Dea. Origen Wells	1839	1843
4 Years	Dea. Jedediah Deming	1843	1847
11 Years	Dea. Levi S. Deming	1847	1858
1 Year	Marcus W. Stoddard	1858	1859
5 Years	Dea. Charles K. Atwood	1859	1864
4 Years	Joseph J. Francis	1864	Dec. 31, 1868
4 Years	Roger Welles	Dec. 31, 1868	Jan. 4, 1873
7 Years	John S. Kirkham	Jan. 4, 1873	Jan. 2, 1880
	Joshua Belden	Jan. 2, 1880	

Note—The dates prior to 1858 in the above list are approximate only in several instances, but are believed to be substantially correct.

Treasurers of the Newington Ecclesiastical Society.

Society Incorporated May, 1713.

Term	Names	Elected	Term Ended
9 Years	Josiah Willard	Dec. 5, 1748	Mar. 9, 1757
22 Years	Robert Wells	June 26, 1757	Dec. 6, 1779
8 Years	Josiah Willard	Dec. 6, 1779	Dec. 3, 1787
16 Years	David Lowrey	Dec. 3, 1787	Feb. 7, 1803
9 Years	Levi Lusk	Feb. 7, 1803	Nov. 2, 1812
14 Years	Amos Andrus	Nov. 2, 1812	Feb. 21, 1826
19 Years	Roger Welles	April 3, 1826	Nov. 4, 1845
28 Years	John M. Belden	Nov. 4, 1845	Nov. 4, 1873
	Joshua Belden	Nov. 4, 1873	

Clerks of the Ecclesiastical Society.

Term	Names	Elected	Term Ended
28 Years	Josiah Willard	April 5, 1716	Dec. 3, 1744
35 Years	Robert Wells	Dec. 3, 1744	Dec. 6, 1779
7 Years	Josiah Willard	Dec. 6, 1779	Dec. 19, 1786
16 Years	Daniel Willard, Jr.	Dec. 19, 1786	Dec. 6, 1802
9 Years	James Wells, Jr.	Dec. 6, 1802	Nov. 4, 1811
30 Years	William Deming	Nov. 4, 1811	Nov. 2, 1841
1 Year	John M. Belden	Nov. 2, 1841	Oct. 1, 1842
3 Years	William Kirkham	Oct. 1, 1842	Nov. 4, 1845
2 Years	Jedediah Deming, Jr.	Nov. 4, 1845	Nov 2, 1847
10 Years	Edwin Welles	Nov. 2, 1847	Nov. 3, 1857
3 Years	John G. Stoddard	Nov. 3, 1857	Nov. 6, 1860
7 Years	Heman A. Whittlesey	Nov. 6, 1860	Nov. 5, 1867
20 Years	Roger Welles	Nov. 5, 1867	Oct. 24, 1887
7 Years	Henry L. Kellogg, Jr.	Oct. 24, 1887	Nov. 12, 1894
	Joseph W. Camp	Nov. 12, 1894	

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